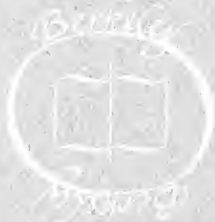


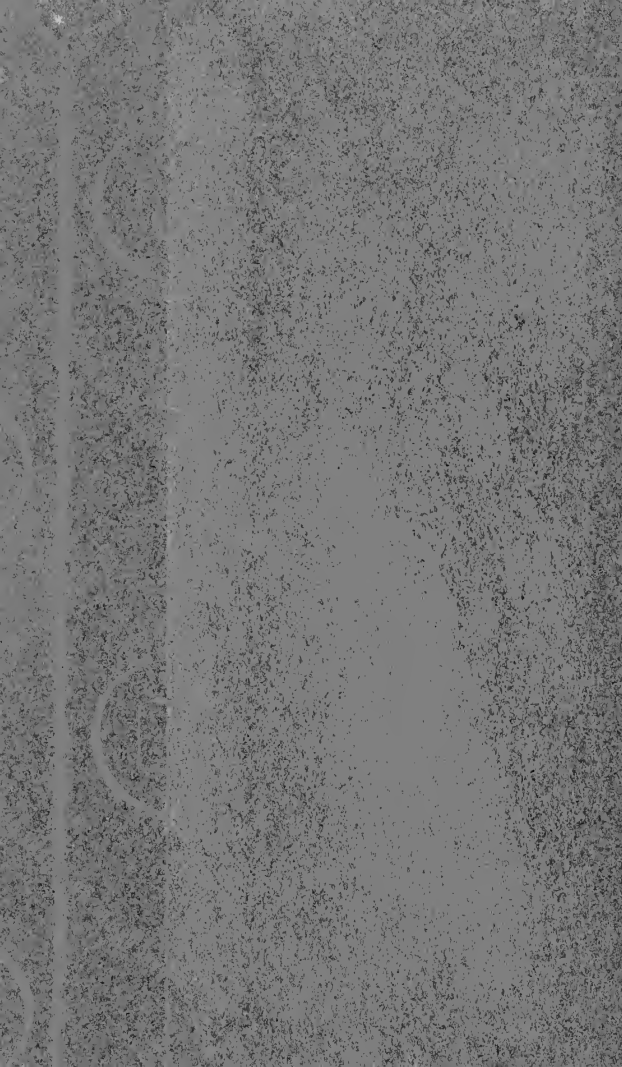
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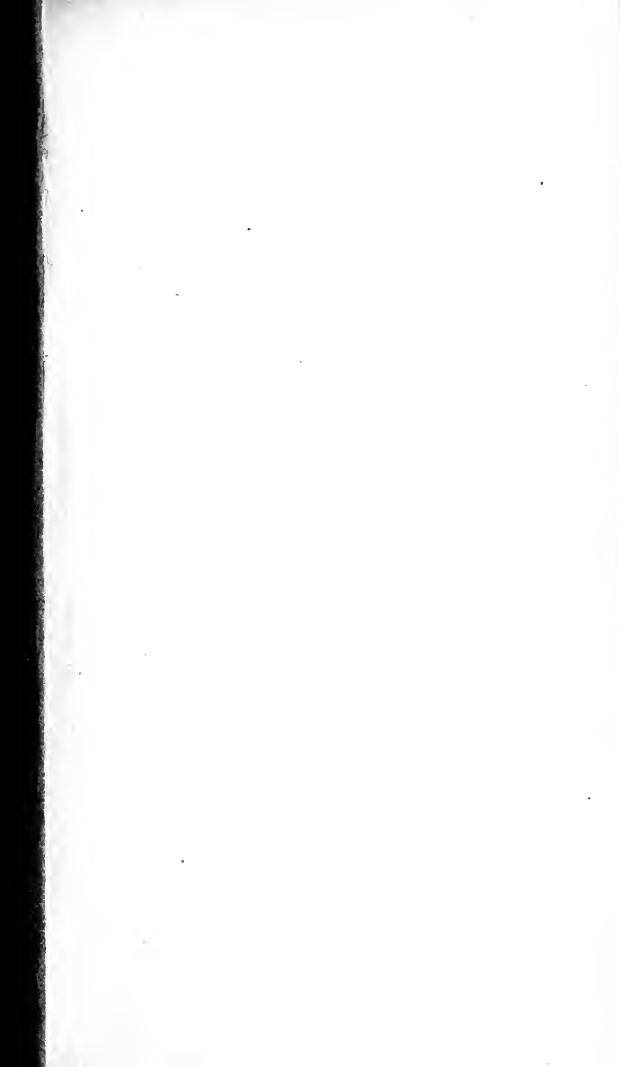


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SCHILLER'S
WILHELM TELL
TRANSLATED BY
ALBERT G. LATHAM





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Schiller.



SCHILLER'S
WILHELM
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LATHAM 

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TO THE
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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HERMANN GESSLER, *Imperial Viceregent in Schwyz and Uri*

WERNER, *Thane of Attinghausen, Bannerknight*

ULRICH VON RUDENZ, *his nephew*

WERNER STAUFFACHER,

CONRAD HUNN,

ITEL REDING,

HANS AUF DER MAUER,

JÖRG IM HOFE,

ULRICH, *the Smith,*

JOST VON WEILER,

WALTER FÜRST,

WILLIAM TELL,

RÖSSELMANN, *the priest,*

PETERMANN, *the sacristan,*

KUONI, *the cowherd,*

WERNI, *the huntsman,*

RUODI, *the fisher,*

ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL,

— CONRAD BAUMGARTEN,

MEIER VON SARNEN,

STRUTH VON WINKELRIED,

KLAUS VON DER FLÜE,

BURKHART AM BÜHEL,

ARNOLD VON SEWA,

PFEIFER OF LUCERNE

KUNZ VON GERSAU

JENNI, *fisherboy*

SEPPI, *cowboy*

} *Men of Schwyz*

} *Men of Uri*

} *Men of Unterwalden*

GERTRUDE, *Stauffacher's wife*

HEDWIG, *Tell's wife, Fürst's daughter*

BERTHA VON BRUNECK, *a rich heiress*

ARMGARD,

MECHTHILD,

ELSBETH,

HILDEGARD,

} *Peasant women*

WALTER,

WILLIAM,

} *Tell's boys*

FRIESSHARDT,

LEUTHOLD,

} *Men-at-arms*

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, *Gessler's Master of the Horse*

JOHN THE PARRICIDE, *Archduke of Swabia*

STÜSSI, *forest-ranger*

THE BULL OF URI

An Imperial Courier

Bailiff, Overseer of the Boon-work

Master-Stonemason, Workmen and Hodbearers

Public Crier

Brethren of Mercy

Troopers of Gessler and Landenberg

Many Country-folk, Men and Women of the Woodsteads

SCHILLER'S WILHELM TELL.

ACT I

SCENE I

HIGH ROCKY SHORE OF THE LAKE OF THE FOUR
WOODSTEADS (LAKE LUCERNE) OVER AGAINST
SCHWYZ.

[*The Lake runs up into the land, making a cove ; a hut stands not far from the shore ; a FISHERLAD is rowing in a boat. Away over the Lake are seen the green meadows, hamlets and homesteads of Schwyz, lying in bright sunshine. To the left of the onlooker appear the peaks of the Haken, wrapped in clouds ; to his right, in the far distance, the ice-mountains. Before the curtain rises the Ranz des Vaches is heard and the harmonious chime of the cowbells, which continues for a while after the raising of the curtain.*

FISHERLAD, *sings in the boat*

Melody of the *Ranz des Vaches*

*The Lake woos to bathe with its ripples of argent,
The lad fell asleep on the green grassy margent,
His heart did sweet singing
Like flute-tones entice,
Like voices of angels
In Paradise.*

*And as he awakens in bliss of the blest,
 The waters are washing about his breast ;
 From the deep calls an echo :
 Dear lad, thou art mine !
 Thus woo I the sleeper,
 Thus lure him in.*

HERDSMAN, *on the mountain*

Variation of the *Ranz des Vaches*

*Farewell, sunny dales
 And meadows of clover !
 The summer is over,
 The herd must away.
 We'll hie to the mountain, now forsaken,
 When the cuckoo calls, when the songs
 awaken,
 When the earth is clad newly with blossom
 and spray,
 When the fountains are flowing in mirth-
 bringing May.*

*Farewell, sunny dales
 And meadows of clover !
 The summer is over,
 The herd must away.*

ALPINE HUNTSMAN

[*Appears over against him on the top
 of the cliffs.*]

Second Variation

*The heights how they thunder, the path quivers
 back,
 Ne'er shudders the archer, though giddy his track.*

*He ranges undaunted
 O'er deserts of snow,
 There blossoms no spring-tide,
 No green thing doth grow ;
 And far 'neath his footsteps the cities of men
 In a mist-surgng ocean are lost to his ken.
 Of the world through the cloud-rift
 A glimpse is revealed,
 Deep under the waters
 The green-springing field.*

*[The scene is overcast, a dull crashing
 is heard from the mountains.
 Shadows of clouds glide over the
 landscape.]*

RUODI THE FISHER comes out of the hut, WERNI
 THE HUNTSMAN climbs down the cliff, KUONI
 THE HERDSMAN comes with the milkpail on his
 shoulders, SEPPi his lad follows him.

RUODI

Bestir thee, Jenni, draw the shallop in !
 The gray Dale-ranger comes, dull moans the ice,
 The Mythenstone doth draw his nightcap on,
 An icy blast blows from the weather-hole,
 The storm will be upon us unawares.

KUONI

There's rain a-coming, ferryman. My sheep
 Crop greedily the grass, and Watcher scrapes
 The earth.

WERNI

The fish leap up, the water-hen
 Dives down beneath the lake. There's thunder
 brewing.

KUONI *to the lad*

Look, Seppi, if the cattle have not strayed.

SEPPI

I hear the tinkling of dun Lisel's bell.

KUONI

Then is the tale complete, she strays the furthest.

RUODI

You have a goodly chime of cowbells, Herdsman.

WERNI

And comely kine, too. Is the herd your own?

KUONI

So rich I am not. He of Attinghausen,
My gracious lord, his are they, and to me
Told out.

RUODI

How well the cow her neckband seems!

KUONI

And well she knows 'tis she doth lead the
march;
She would not eat, an I should take it from her.

RUODI

Nonsense! A beast that hath no understanding.

WERNI

Soon said, but beasts have understanding too.
That do we know full well, that hunt the
chamois.

There where they pasture, cunningly they set
 A sentry, that doth prick his ear, and warn
 With a shrill whistling if the hunter nears.

RUODI *to the herdsman*

Do ye drive homeward now?

KUONI

The Alp quite bare
 Is cropped.

WERNI

A safe home-coming to you, Herdsman!

KUONI

That wish I you; they come not always home
 That tread your path.

RUODI

What man runs here so hotly?

WERNI

I know him. 'Tis Baumgarten of Allzellen.

CONRAD BAUMGARTEN, *rushing in breathlessly*

For God's sake, Ferryman, your boat! your
 boat!

RUODI

Come! come! What is the hurry, pray?

BAUMGARTEN

Cast off!

My life is on the stake! Ferry me over!

KUONI

What is it, Countryman?

WERNI

Who gives you chase?

BAUMGARTEN, *to the Fisherman*

Haste! haste! they follow hard upon my heels!
 The Landgrave's troopers ride upon my track.
 If they lay hands on me my life is forfeit.

RUODI

And wherefore ride the horsemen after you?

BAUMGARTEN

Save me, then will I bide your questioning.

WERNI

You're blood-bespattered; tell us what hath
 chanced.

BAUMGARTEN

The Emperor's Burgrave, he that Rossberg
 held——

KUONI

What, Wolfenschiessen! Bids he follow you?

BAUMGARTEN

Nay, he'll do no more mischief. Him I've
 slain!

ALL, starting back

Be gracious to you God! What have you
 done?

BAUMGARTEN

What every freeman in my place had done!
 My own good house-right have I exercised

On him that wronged mine honour and my wife.

KUONI

What! hath the Burgrave smirched thine honour then?

BAUMGARTEN

That he his evil lusts hath not accomplished
Did God forbend, God and my own good axe.

WERNI

What, with thine axe didst cleave his head in twain?

KUONI

O let us hear the story! Time will serve
Till from the shore he hath unmoored the craft.

BAUMGARTEN

I had been felling timber in the forest,
When wild with fear, my wife comes running up.
"The Burgrave at my house had lit—had charged her

She should prepare a bath for him, thereon
Had urged on her compliance with his wishes
Unseemly—she had fled to seek for me."

I ran up as I was, and with my axe
Bestowed a bloody blessing on his bath.

WERNI

That was well done! For that can no man
blame you!

KUONI

The bloody tyrant! now he hath his meed
Long merited from the folk of Unterwalden.

BAUMGARTEN

The deed was noised abroad—they give me
chase.

E'en while we talk, ah God! the moments fly!
[*It begins to thunder.*]

KUONI

Quick, Ferryman! Row the trusty heart
across!

RUODI

Not I! A heavy thunderstorm draws on;
The man must wait.

BAUMGARTEN

Thou Holy God in Heaven!
I cannot, cannot wait! Delay is death!

KUONI, *to the Fisherman*

Lay to, in God's name! Each must help his
neighbour!

No man but a like fortune may befall.

[*Roaring wind and thunder.*]

RUODI

The Föhn is on us! See you not yourselves
How high the lake runs? I can make no way
I' the teeth of storm and billows.

BAUMGARTEN, *clasping his knees*

God on you
Have pity, as you on me!

WERNI

'Tis life and death!
Have pity, Boatman!

KUONI

He's a housefather,
Hath wife and children!
[*Repeated claps of thunder.*]

RUODI

What, and have not I
A life to lose like him, and wife and child
At home like him? See how it boils and
surges
And eddies, and all the waters from the bottom
Seethe up! I'd save the worthy man right gladly,
But see yourselves! 'Tis sheer impossible!

BAUMGARTEN, *still kneeling*

Then must I fall into my foemen's hands,
In sight of yonder near delivering shore.
There doth it lie—mine eyes can reach unto it,
My voice can send a ringing shout across.
There is the boat might lightly bear me over,
Yet helpless here and hopeless must I lie.

KUONI

See! who comes yonder?

WERNI

Tell it is, from Bürglen!
[*Enter TELL with the crossbow.*]

TELL

Who is the man that here imploreth help?

KUONI

'Tis an Allzeller man, that hath his honour
Defended, and the Emperor's Burgrave slain,

Him that held Rossberg, him of Wolfenschiessen.
 The Landgrave's troopers hotly give him chase;
 He prays the ferryman to row him over;
He fears the storm and will not venture out.

RUODI

There's Tell, he plies the oar, let him be witness
 If such a passage may be dared!

TELL

Why, Boatman,
 I' the hour of need there's naught but may be
 dared.

[*Violent thunderclaps; the lake surges
 up.*]

RUODI

What, plunge myself into the jaws of Hell!
 There's none would do't—he were a madman
 else!

TELL

The brave man thinks on self the last of all.
 Free the oppressed and set thy trust in God!

RUODI

From the safe haven easy 'tis to counsel;
 There is the boat, the lake! Make thou the
 proof!

TELL

The lake may pity show, but not the Landgrave.
 Come, Boatman, try it!

SHEPHERD *and* HUNTSMAN

Save him! Save him! Save him!

RUODI

Were he my brother, were he mine own son,
It cannot be! 'Tis Jude and Simon's Day,
The lake doth roar and raven for its victim.

TELL

Here is there nothing done with idle talk!
The hour is urgent, help the man must have!
Speak, Boatman, wilt thou put from shore?

RUODI

Not I!

TELL

In God's name, then! Here with the boat,
and I
With my weak strength will put it to the proof!

RUONI

Ha! gallant Tell!

WERNI

There spake the doughty woodman!

BAUMGARTEN

Thou art my saviour and mine angel, Tell!

TELL

From out the Landgrave's power I'll save thee,
aye!

From peril of the storm must other help
Deliver. Yet 'twere better in God's hand
To fall, than into man's!

[To the shepherd.

Good countryman,
Comfort my wife, if aught of ill befall me.
I have done that I could not leave undone.

[Springs into the boat.

KUONI, *to the fisherman*

You are a master-steersman, could not you
Have ventured that that Tell doth take in hand?

RUODI

E'en better men would rival not with Tell.
There's not his fellow in the mountain-land.

WERNI, *who has climbed upon the cliff*

He's pushing off. God help thee, gallant sailor!
How tosses on the waves the tiny craft!

KUONI, *on the shore*

The flood sweeps over it. No more I see it!
Yet stay! 'Tis there again! How sturdily
The gallant-hearted fellow stems the surges!

SEPPI

Here come the Landgrave's troopers at a gallop.

KUONI

God knows, 'tis they! Nay, that was help in
need!

[*Enter a troop of Landenbergish
horsemen.*]

FIRST TROOPER

The murderer ye have harboured, give him up!

SECOND TROOPER

This way he came; in vain ye seek to hide him.

KUONI *and* RUODI

Whom mean ye, troopers?

FIRST TROOPER

What is that? Damnation!

WERNI *above*

'Tis yon man in the boat ye seek? Ride on!
Crowd on all sail! Ye'll overtake him yet!

SECOND TROOPER

Curse him! He's slipped away!

FIRST TROOPER

[*To the herdsman and the fisherman.*

Ye helped him off!

Dearly ye'll rue it! Fall upon their herds!
Tear down their hut! Down with it! Burn
and smash!

[*They hasten off.*

SEPPI, *rushing after them*

Alas! my lambs! my lambs!

KUONI *following*

Woe's me, my cattle!

WERNI

The bloody-minded tyrants!

RUODI, *wringing his hands*

Thou just Heaven!

When shall there come the saviour to this land?

[*He follows them.*

SCENE II

AT STEINEN, IN SCHWYZ.

*A lime-tree before Stauffacher's house on the
highroad near the bridge.*

[Enter WERNER STAUFFACHER and
PFEIFER of LUCERNE in conver-
sation.

PFEIFER

Aye, Master Stauffacher, as I was saying,
Take ye no oath to Austria, can ye help it,
But staunch and sturdy to the Empire cleave
As heretofore, and God protect you in
Your ancient liberties!

[*Presses his hand heartily, and makes
as if he would go.*

STAUFFACHER

Nay, stay but till
My housewife comes. In Schwyz you are my
guest
As I yours in Lucerne.

PFEIFER

Thanks from my heart!
To-day I must reach Gersau. Bear with
patience
Whatever hardships you must suffer from
The greed and arrogance of your Governors.
Things may yet change and quickly. To the
throne

Another Emperor may come, but are you
Once Austria's, ye are Austria's for ever.

[*Exit Pfeifer. Stauffacher sits down in anxious thought on a bench beneath the lime-tree. GERTRUDE his wife finds him so, and takes her place beside him, looking at him a while in silence.*]

GERTRUDE

So thoughtful, dearest? Now no more I know thee.

For many days in silence have I watched
How brooding melancholy lined thy brow.
Some secret grief sits heavy on thine heart.
Share it with me—I am thine own true wife,
And claim of all thy care mine equal half.

[*Stauffacher gives her his hand and keeps silence.*]

What can thine heart so burden? Tell it me!
A blessing rests upon thine industry,
Thy fortune flourishes, the barns are full,
The troops of beeves and the sleek horses' breed,
Well-nourished, from the mountain are returned
Safely, to winter in the roomy stalls.
There stands thine house, rich as a noble-seat.
Of goodly trunkwood is it newly timbered,
And nicely morticed, all by rule and square.
It shines with many windows, homely, bright.
With gaily-coloured scutcheons is it painted,
And with wise saws, the which the wayfarer
Taries to read, and marvels at their wit.

STAUFFACHER.

Aye, timbered well and morticed stands the house,
But ah! the ground we built on quakes beneath us!

GERTRUDE

My Werner, tell me, how dost thou mean that ?

STAUFFACHER

A little while agoe, I sat as now
Beneath this limetree, musing, glad at heart,
On all the goodly work our hands have wrought,
When with his troopers on the road from
Küssnacht

His castle, came the Landgrave riding by,
And wondering, before this house drew rein.
But quickly from my seat I rose, and moved
With reverent obeisance, as beseems,
To greet the lord that in the Emperor's room
The majesty of justice doth present
Within our land. "Whose is this house?" he
asked,

With malice in his heart, for well he knew.
But I with ready wit made answer thus :
"This house, Sir Landgrave, is my Lord the
Emperor's,
And yours, and mine in fee." Then added he :
"Here am I Regent in the Emperor's stead.
I will not have the peasant build him houses
On his own warrant, and live on as free
From day to day, as were he lord i' the land.
I'll take upon myself to make an end on't."
Thus did he speak and scowling rode away.
But I abode and pondered in mine heart
The evil man's discourse, with boding soul.

GERTRUDE

My dearest lord and husband, wilt thou hear
From thy true wife, a frankly spoken word ?

The noble Iberg's daughter vaunt I me,
 That had much lore of life. We sisters sat
 Spinning the wool through the long evening
 hours,

When at our father's house together met
 Those that were chief amongst the folk, and read
 The parchments of the ancient Emperors,
 And in wise discourse weighed the country's
 weal.

Then, mindful, many a prudent word I caught,
 What thought the wise man and what wished
 the good,

And treasured it in silence in my heart.
 Wherefore do thou now hear and heed my
 speech;

For see! long since I knew what burdened
 thee.

The Landgrave looks on thee with evil eye,
 And fain would do thee mischief. Thou dost
 block

The way, so that the Switzer will not bow
 Unto the yoke of the new princely house,
 But staunch and steadfast to the Empire cleaves
 As our brave fathers ever held and did.
 Is't not so, Werner? Tell me if I err.

STAUFFACHER

It is so; that is Gessler's grudge against me.

GERTRUDE

He envies thee, because thou dwellest happy,
 A free man on thine own inheritance,
 For he hath none. From Emperor and from
 Empire

Thou hast this house in fee, aye, and canst show
it,

E'en as the Prince that from the Empire hath
His tenure, shows his lands, for thou dost
own

No overlord, save him that highest is
In Christendom. But he a younger son
Is of his house, and naught can call his own,
Save his knight's-mantle. So the good man's
weal

With venomous malignancy he eyes
Askance. Long since thy ruin hath he sworn,
Yet dost thou stand inviolate. Wilt wait
Till he hath wreaked on thee his evil heart?
The wise man builds a dam against the flood.

STAUFFACHER

What can be done?

GERTRUDE, *drawing nearer*

My counsel hear! Thou knowest
How heavily here in Schwyz all honest men
This Landgrave's greed and ruthless fury bear.
Then never doubt but they too over yonder
In Unterwalden, and the folk of Uri
Are galled and weary of this bitter yoke,
For yonder o'er the lake, as Gessler here,
The Landenberger bears him insolently.
There comes no fisher-boat to the hither-shore
But brings us tidings of some new-wrought mis-
chief,

Some deed of violence of these governors.
Thus it were well that sundry men of you
Of good intent, should quietly take counsel

How you may best be franchised of this yoke.
 Thus deem I surely, God will not forsake
 you,
 But to the righteous cause will gracious be.
 Hast thou in Uri not some guest-friend, speak,
 To whom thine heart thou mayst unburden
 frankly?

STAUFFACHER

Aye, there I know full many a valiant man ;
 Great gentle-folk, too, held in high esteem,
 Men of my privity, most intimate.
 [He rises to his feet
 Wife, what a storm of perilous thoughts thou
 wakest
 Within my silent bosom ! Thou dost turn
 Mine inmost heart forth to the light of day,
 And bidd'st me look thereon. What I not
 dared
 To think in silence, thou dost boldly speak
 With a light tongue. And hast thou fully
 weighed
 What thou dost counsel ? Into this still valley
 Grown used to peace, wild discord dost thou
 summon
 And clang of arms. What ! we, a feeble folk
 Of shepherds, front in battle them that are
 The masters of the world ! They do but wait
 Some fair pretence to loose on this poor land
 The wild hordes of their warlike armament,
 Therein to lord it with a conqueror's rights,
 And under colour of just chastisement
 The ancient charters of our liberties
 To tear asunder,

GERTRUDE

Ye are men, ye too!
Ye too can wield an axe, and the brave man
God helps.

STAUFFACHER

O wife, a hideous raging terror
Is war—the herd it smites and smites the herds-
man.

GERTRUDE

What Heaven sends we cannot choose but suffer;
No noble heart will brook to suffer wrong.

STAUFFACHER

This newly-built house doth glad thine heart—
But war, fell war, will burn it to the ground!

GERTRUDE

Knew I mine heart enthralled by worldly gear,
With mine own hand I'd hurl the fire-brand in.

STAUFFACHER

Thou dost believe in pity—war will pity
Not even the tender babe within the cradle.

GERTRUDE

In Heaven hath innocence a friend. My
Werner,
Look forward, cast no glance behind thy back.

STAUFFACHER

We men can fight, and bravely fighting, fall;
But what a destiny on you doth wait!

GERTRUDE

The weakest in the end can choose his fate—
One leap from off this bridge and I am free !

STAUFFACHER, *rushing into her arms*

Who to his breast so stout a heart doth clasp
Blithely for hearth and home may fight, nor fear
The embattled might of any king on earth !
I will to Uri even as I stand.
I have a guest-friend there, that views these
times

As I do, Master Walter Fürst. There too
The noble Bannerknight of Attinghausen
I trust to find—though sprung of gentle stock
He loves the people, and the ancient customs
He honours. With these twain will I take
counsel

To ward us stoutly 'gainst our country's foe.
Farewell, and do thou guide whilst I am far,
With prudent mind, the conduct of the house.
The pilgrim, faring to the House of God,
The holy friar, that for his abbey begs,
Load with thy bounty, and well entertained
Dismiss. Stauffacher's house not hides itself.
Before the open highway first it greets
With hospitable roof the wayfarer.

[*Whilst they go up the stage, enter*

WILLIAM TELL *and* BAUMGARTEN
in the front of the scene.

TELL, *to Baumgarten*

You have no further need of me. Go in
To yonder house. Stauffacher here doth dwell,

A friend to them that are oppressed—but see
 There is the man himself. Follow me. Come!
 [*They go towards him. The scene
 changes.*]

SCENE III

OPEN PLACE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF ALTORF

[*Upon a height in the background a fortress is seen
 building, which is already so far advanced
 that the form of the whole can be made out.
 The back part is already finished, building is
 going on in the front. The scaffolding still
 stands, and the workmen are going up and
 down upon it. On the topmost roof the Tiler
 is suspended. All are astir and hard at
 work.*]

BAILIFF, MASTER MASON, WORKMEN, and
 HODBEARERS

BAILIFF, *with the staff, urges on the workmen.*

No lengthy breathing-space! Bestir ye! Bring
 The ashlar-blocks—here with the lime and
 mortar!

When comes my Lord the Landgrave, let him
 see

The work advanced. Ye pack of loitering
 snails!

[*To two hodbearers*]

What, call ye that a load? Quick, double it!
 The lazy hounds, how filch they from their task

FIRST WORKMAN

'Tis hard, aye that it is, that we the stones
 Ourselves must bring, unto our yoke and dungeon.

BAILIFF

Must ye be murmuring? A shiftless folk,
And good for nothing but to milk the beasts
And loiter idly round upon the mountains.

OLD MAN, *resting*

I can no more!

BAILIFF, *shaking him*

To work, old man, and briskly.

FIRST WORKMAN

Have you no bowels of compassion, then,
That to the heavy boon-work thus ye drive
The grey old man, that scarce can trail himself?

MASTER STONEMASON *and* WORKMEN

It cries to Heaven!

BAILIFF

Heed ye yourselves! I do
Mine office.

SECOND WORKMAN

Bailiff, say, how shall be called
This stronghold that we build?

BAILIFF

Its name shall be
Keep Uri, for beneath this yoke your masters
Shall bow your necks.

WORKMEN

Keep Uri!

BAILIFF.

Ye are merry!
 What makes you laugh?

SECOND WORKMAN

Keep Uri with this hovel?

FIRST WORKMAN

How many suchlike molehills must you pile
 One on another, ere you build a mountain
 As high as that, that lowest is in Uri!

[Bailiff goes towards the background.]

MASTER STONEMASON

Into the deepest lake I'll hurl the hammer
 That helped to fashion this accursed building.

[TELL and STAUFFACHER come.]

STAUFFACHER

Oh, had I ne'er been born to see this sight!

TELL

Here am I ill at ease, let us go on!

STAUFFACHER

Am I in Uri, in the home of freedom?

MASTER STONEMASON

O sir! and had you but the dungeon seen
 Beneath the towers! He that dwells therein,
 He'll hear no more the crowing of the cock.

STAUFFACHER

Oh God!

MASON

Look at these flanking walls, these buttresses !
Seem they not builded for eternity !

TELL

What hands have builded, hands can overthrow.
[*Pointing to the mountains.*
Our House of Freedom God himself hath stab-
lished !

[*A drum is heard. People come bearing
a hat upon a pole ; a CRIER follows
them. Women and children crowd
after them tumultuously.*

FIRST WORKMAN

What means the drum ? Give heed !

MASTER STONEMASON

What is this rout
Of Shrovetide-mummers, and what means the
hat ?

CRIER

I' the Emperor's name ! Oyez ! Oyez !

WORKMEN

Give ear !

Hush ! hush !

CRIER

Ye see this hat, ye men of Uri !
It shall be set upon a lofty column
I' the midst of Altorf, on the highest ground.
This is the Landgrave's will and pleasure. Ye

Unto the hat such reverence shall show
 As to himself. With bended knee ye shall
 Do homage to it, and with baréd head.
 Thereby the King will know the dutiful
 Among ye. Who this mandate sets at naught,
 Body and goods is forfeit to the King.

*[The people laugh aloud, the drum rolls,
 they pass over.]*

FIRST WORKMAN

Why, what a new, unheard-of freak the Land-
 grave
 Hath here devised! What! We unto a hat
 Do reverence! Was ever heard the like!

MASTER STONEMASON

What! We unto a hat must bend the knee!
 Thus doth he jest with sober, serious folk!

FIRST WORKMAN

An't were the imperial crown, now! But it is
 The hat of Austria—I saw it hang
 Over the throne, there where the fiefs are
 granted.

MASTER STONEMASON

The hat of Austria! Give ye heed! It is
 A snare that shall to Austria betray us.

WORKMEN

No honourable man will brook the shame!

MASTER STONEMASON

Come, with the others let us counsel frame.

[They go up the scene.]

TELL, *to Stauffacher*

So now you know the story. Fare you well,
Good Master Werner.

STAUFFACHER

Leave us not so soon!

TELL

My house doth crave its father. Fare you
well!

STAUFFACHER

My heart is brimming full to talk with thee.

TELL

The heavy-laden heart can words not lighten.

STAUFFACHER

Yet words might haply lead us on to deeds.

TELL

Now is there but one deed—patience and
silence.

STAUFFACHER

What! Must we bear what is insufferable?

TELL

Impetuous rulers have the shortest sway.
When from its gorges rises up the Föhn,
Then do we quench the fires, the ships in haste
The haven seek, so sweeps the mighty spirit
Harmless o'er earth, nor leaves a trace behind.
Let each man live in quiet in his home,
The peaceable they'll gladly leave in peace.

STAUFFACHER

Think ye so ?

TELL

Unprovoked, the adder bites not.
They yet will weary of themselves at last
When they shall see the lands remain un-
moved.

STAUFFACHER

We might do much if we but stood together.

TELL

In shipwreck each may better help himself.

STAUFFACHER

So coldly you forsake the common cause ?

TELL

Safely may each rely but on himself.

STAUFFACHER

United e'en the weak may prove them mighty.

TELL

The strong is mightiest when he stands alone.

STAUFFACHER

The Fatherland then may not count upon you,
If it should stand to arms in its despair ?

TELL, *giving him his hand*

Tell seeks the lambkin lost in the abyss,
And should he turn his back upon his friends ?
But from your counsel leave me, whatsoe'er

Ye do. I know not long to choose and weigh;
 Me should you need the settled deed to dare,
 Then call on Tell, Tell will not say you nay.

[*They go off in different directions. A sudden commotion arises about the scaffolding.*]

MASTER STONEMASON, *hurrying up*

What is't?

FIRST WORKMAN, *comes forward shouting*

The tiler headlong from the roof is fallen!

BERTHA, *rushing in with her retinue*

What! is he crushed? Oh, hurry! save him!
 help!

Save him if help avail! See, here is gold!

[*She throws her jewels amongst the people.*]

MASTER

Aye, with your gold—there's naught with you
 but gold

Will buy it! From the children have you torn
 The father, and the husband from his wife,
 Have ye brought wailing o'er the world, ye
 think

With gold to make it good again. Away!
 We were light-hearted men before ye came,
 With you despair came in.

BERTHA, *to the Bailiff who comes back*

Say, doth he live?

[*Bailiff shakes his head.*]

O thou ill-omened castle, built with curses,
 And curses of a truth shall dwell in thee! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV

WALTER FÜRST'S HOUSE

WALTER FÜRST and ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL
enter at the same time from different sides.

MELCHTHAL

Good Master Fürst—

WALTER FÜRST

What if we were surprised!
 Stay where you are! We're compassed round
 with spies.

MELCHTHAL

Bring you no news for me from Unterwalden?
 None from my father? I can brook no longer
 A captive here to sit in idleness.
 What have I done that is so criminal
 That like a murderer I must skulk in hiding?
 The saucy varlet that before mine eyes
 Upon the Landgrave's bidding would have
 driven
 Mine oxen forth from me, the goodliest yoke,
 Him with my staff I smote and brake his finger.

WALTER FÜRST

You are too hot; the fellow was the Land-
 grave's,
 Was sent by them that are set over you;
 You had drawn punishment upon your head,
 And, were it ne'er so heavy, should have paid
 The penalty in silence.

MELCHTHAL

What, and borne

The shameless varlet's gibe: "And would the
peasant

Eat bread, e'en let him draw the plough him-
self!"

It cut me to the soul, when he unyoked

The oxen from the plough—the bonny beasts.

Deeply they lowed, as had they of the outrage

Full consciousness, and butted with their horns.

Then there got hold on me a righteous wrath—

Beside myself, I smote the messenger.

WALTER FÜRST

Oh! hardly do we bridle our own hearts,

And how should hasty youth control itself?

MELCHTHAL

One only thought mine heart doth wring. My
father

Needs care, and sorely, and his son is far.

The Landgrave bears him malice, for that he

For right and liberty hath ever striven,

And therefore will they bear the old man hard,

And none to shelter him from contumely.

Happen to me what will, I must go over.

WALTER FÜRST

Wait, and with patience arm yourself, till tidings
From Unterwalden cross. I hear a knocking.

Go! from the Landgrave comes a messenger

Belike. Pray go within! You are not safe

In Uri from the Landenberger's arm,

For hand in hand the tyrants link against us.

MELCHTHAL

They teach us what ourselves should do.

WALTER FÜRST

Away!

I'll call you back when all is safe again.

[*Melchthal goes within.*]

Unhappy lad! To him I dare not own
What evil bodings haunt my soul. Who
knocks?

The door ne'er sounds, but I await disaster.

Mistrust and treason lurk in every corner;

The ministers of violence invade

Our houses' inmost sanctuaries; 'twere needful
Soon to have lock and bolt upon the door.

[*He opens and steps back in amaze as*

WERNER STAUFFACHER *enters.*]

What see I? Master Werner! Now, by
Heaven,

A dear and honoured guest! No better man
Hath yet set foot across this threshold. Wel-
come,

Thrice welcome 'neath my roof! Most hearty
welcome!

What brings you here? What seek you here
in Uri?

STAUFFACHER, *giving him his hand*

'The olden times—the Switzers' ancient land.

WALTER FÜRST

Them you bring with you. Come, this does me
good!

My heart grows warm and light at sight of you!
Be seated, Master Werner. And how left you

Dame Gertrude, pray, your amiable housewife,
 Wise Iberg's daughter, and herself most prudent?
 No traveller from out the German land
 That fares past Meinrad's Cell to Italy
 But vaunts your hospitable house. Yet say
 Do you come hither straight from Flüelen,
 And have you elsewhere cast no glance around
 Before you set your foot upon this threshold?

STAUFFACHER *sits down*

In sooth, a new, astounding work I saw
 In course of growth, that did not gladden me.

WALTER FÜRST

Oh! there you have it at a single glance!
 The like hath never been in Uri—here
 Within the memory of man hath been
 No dungeon-keep, no fastness but the grave.

WALTER FÜRST

'Tis Freedom's grave; you call it by its name!

STAUFFACHER

Good Master Fürst, I will not hide it, me
 Not idle curiosity brings here,
 But heavy cares weigh on my heart. Oppres-
 sion

I left at home, oppression here I find!
 For what we suffer is intolerable;
 And of this grievous yoke I see no end.
 Free hath the Switzer been from everlasting.
 We are accustomed to be met with kindness.
 The like hath never in this land been known
 Since on these hills a herd first fed his flock.

WALTER FÜRST

Aye, 'tis unheard of, how they bear themselves.
 Our noble Thane of Attinghausen too,
 He that hath seen the olden times as well,
 Himself doth say 'tis no more to be borne.

STAUFFACHER

In Unterwalden yonder grievous deeds
 Are likewise done, and bloodily atoned.
 The Emperor's Burgrave, Wolfenschiessen, he
 That dwelt on Rossberg, for forbidden fruit
 Did lust. Baumgarten's wife, that in Alzellen
 His house had, he to shameless end had fain
 Misused. The husband slew him with his axe.

WALTER FÜRST

Oh! righteous are the dooms that God decrees!
 Baumgarten, said you not? A modest fellow!
 The man is safe, I trust, and in good hiding.

STAUFFACHER

Your daughter's husband helped him o'er the
 lake,
 And in my house at Steinen lies he hidden.
 Himself hath brought me tidings of a deed
 More horrible, that hath been wrought at Sarnen.
 No man of feeling but his heart must bleed.

WALTER FÜRST, *attentive*

Say on! What is't?

STAUFFACHER

In Melchthal, where at Kerns
 The dale you enter, dwells an upright man.
 They call him Heinrich von der Halden, and
 His voice hath weight in the community.

WALTER FÜRST

Who knows him not? What of him? Make
an end!

STAUFFACHER

Upon his son the Landenberger laid,
For some slight fault, a fine, and bade unyoke
His oxen from the plough, his goodliest pair.
Then smote the lad the messenger and took
To flight.

WALTER FÜRST

[*In an agony of apprehension.*
Aye, but the father, what of him?

STAUFFACHER

The Landenberger calls him to his presence,
And bids him straightway set his son before
him,
And when the old man swears, and swears with
truth,
He hath no tidings of the fugitive,
Then doth the Landgrave call the torturers in—

WALTER FÜRST

[*Springs up and seeks to lead him to
the other side.*

Oh, hush! no more!

STAUFFACHER, *with rising intonation*

“And hath the son escaped me,
Yet have I thee!”—Bids fling him to the
ground,
And in his eyeballs plunge the pointed steel.

WALTER FÜRST

Merciful Heaven!

MELCHTHAL, *bursting out*

Into his eyeballs, say you?

STAUFFACHER, *amazed, to Walter Fürst*

Who is the lad?

MELCHTHAL, *grips him with convulsive violence*

Into his eyeballs? Speak!

WALTER FÜRST

O hapless, hapless lad!

STAUFFACHER

Who is it, say?

[*On Walter Fürst's giving him a sign*

The son it is? All-righteous God!

MELCHTHAL

And I,

I was far from him! Into both his eyeballs?

WALTER FÜRST

Master yourself! Endure it like a man!

MELCHTHAL

And for my fault! And for my wicked folly!
Blind, say you? Blind indeed, and wholly
blinded?

STAUFFACHER

The fount of sight hath wholly ebb'd away.
Never again he'll see the light o' the sun!

WALTER FÜRST

Oh, spare his anguish!

MELCHTHAL

Never! never again!

[He presses his hand over his eyes and remains silent some moments, then he turns from one to the other and speaks in a softer voice, choked with tears

Oh, what a noble boon of Heaven is
The light o' the eye! All creatures from the
light

Drink in their life, each happy living thing.
The very plant turns blithely to the light,
And he must sit and grope in endless gloom,
In night eternal! Him no more shall gladden
The meadows' sunny green, the flowers' bright
hues;

No more he'll see the snowy mountain-peaks
Flush with faint rose beneath the touch of dawn!
To die is nothing, but to live and see not—
That is ill-chance! Why do ye look on me
So pityingly? Have I not two clear eyes
And yet can give none to mine eyeless father—
Not one pale glimmer from the sea of light,
That radiant, dazzling, floods mine eyes with
splendour.

STAUFFACHER

Alas! I yet must aggravate your grief,
Instead of healing it. He lacks still more.
Of everything the Landgrave hath bereft him;
Naught hath he left him but the staff, to wander
Naked and blind from door to door.

MELCHTHAL

The staff!
 Naught but the staff to that poor, blind, old man!
 Bereft of all, e'en to the light o' the sun
 That is the poorest wretch's common good.
 Now tell me none of staying, none of hiding!
 Why, what a dastard wretch am I, that took
 But thought for mine own safety, none for thine!
 That thy dear head within the tyrant's hands
 Left as a hostage! Craven-hearted caution
 Farewell! I'll think on naught but bloody
 vengeance!
 I'll to him, none shall stay me; from the
 Landgrave
 Will I require my father's eye. I'll find him
 'Midst all his troopers. Naught I reck of life,
 So I this hot intolerable anguish
 Cool in his life's blood.

[*He makes as if he would go.*]

WALTER FÜRST

Stay! What can you do
 Against him? He at Sarnen dwells on high,
 Safe in his lordly castle, and doth laugh
 Your feeble wrath to scorn in his sure stronghold.

MELCHTHAL

Though yonder in the Schreckhorn's palace of
 ice
 He dwelt, or higher, where the Jungfrau sits
 Veiled since eternity, I'd make a road
 To come at him. Give me, like-minded with
 me,
 But twenty youths, his stronghold will I shatter.

And if none follow me, and if you all,
 Fearful for hut and herd, should bend your
 necks

Beneath the tyrant's yoke, then in the mountain
 The herdsmen will I call together, there
 'Neath the free roof of Heaven, where the
 thought

Is yet untainted and the heart still whole,
 There will I tell this monstrous tale of horror.

STAUFFACHER, *to Walter Fürst*

It hath attained its summit. Shall we wait
 Until the uttermost—

MELCHTHAL

What uttermost
 Is still to fear, when now no longer is
 'The apple of the eye safe in its socket?
 Are we defenceless then? Why did we learn
 To bend the crossbow, and to swing aloft
 The battle-axe's ponderous weight? No creature
 But findeth in the anguish of despair
 A weapon. The spent stag will stand at bay
 And show his dreaded antlers to the pack;
 The chamois drags the hunter o'er the brink
 Into the yawning gulf; the very plough-ox,
 Man's housemate meek, that patiently doth bend
 His neck's gigantic strength unto the yoke,
 Leaps up when stirred to anger, fiercely whets
 His mighty horn, and cloudwards hurls his foe.

WALTER FÜRST

Did the three lands but think as we three think
 We peradventure might accomplish something.

STAUFFACHER

When Uri calls, when Unterwalden helps,
The ancient leagues the Switzer then will
honour.

MELCHTHAL

Many the friends I count in Unterwalden,
And each will blithely hazard life and blood,
So he but backing in his neighbour have,
And screen. O pious fathers of this land,
Between you here I stand, you that are rich
In garnered wisdom, I an unripe lad.
My voice must in the folk-moot modestly
Keep silence. Do not, for that I am young
And have small skill of life, despise my counsel,
Or slight my speech. Not wanton youthful
blood,
The torturing might of deepest woe doth drive
me,
Such as would move the very stones to pity.
Yourselves are fathers, heads of houses, ye
Would wish yourselves to have a virtuous son,
One that the sacred locks upon your heads
Would honour, one that the apple of your eye
Would piously defend. O not because
Yourselves in life and goods have yet not
suffered,
And clear and bright your eyes within their
orbits
Still move, let not for that our misery
Be strange to you. O'er you the tyrant's
sword
Hangs too. From Austria ye too have turned
The land. None other was my father's wrong,
And ye too share his guilt and his damnation.

STAUFFACHER *to Walter Fürst*

Do you resolve, I am prepared to follow.

WALTER FÜRST

First let us hear what 'tis the noble Thanes
Of Sillinen and Attinghausen counsel.

Their name, methinks, will surely win us
friends.

MELCHTHAL

Where in the mountain-woodlands is a name
Than yours more honourable, or than yours?
The sterling currency of names like these
The folk will trust—they ring well in the land.
You have a rich inheritance of virtue

Left by your fathers, richly by yourselves
Increased. What need of noblemen? Alone
We'll end it! Would we were indeed i' the
land

Alone! We'd know, I ween, how to defend
us.

STAUFFACHER

'Tis true, there urges not like need the noble
With us. The stream that rages in the low-
lands

Not yet hath reached the heights. Yet will not
fail us

Their help, when once they see the land in arms.

WALTER FÜRST

Were there an arbiter 'twixt Austria
And us, then right and law might judge between
us.

But he that doth oppress us is our Emperor,

And our supremest judge. Then God must
 help us
 Through our right arm. Prove you the men of
 Schwyz,
 And I in Uri will recruit us friends.
 But whom to Unterwalden shall we send?

MELCHTHAL

Me thither send. Whom doth it touch more
 nearly?

WALTER FÜRST

There I say nay! You are my guest—I must
 Be warrant for your safety.

MELCHTHAL

Let me go!

I know the byways and the mountain-paths.
 Friends I shall find in plenty too, who gladly
 Will hide me from the foe, and give me shelter.

STAUFFACHER

Nay, let him go, and God go with him!
 Yonder

There is no traitor. Tyranny hath grown
 So loathsome, it can find no instrument.
 Below the Wood, Baumgarten of Alzellen
 Shall win us comrades and stir up the land.

MELCHTHAL

And how shall each to each sure tidings bring,
 And baffle the suspicions of our tyrants?

STAUFFACHER

At Brunnen or at Treib we might assemble,
 There where the trading-vessels come to shore.

MELCHTHAL

Oh! my poor, blind old father!
 The day of freedom thou no more canst see,
 But thou shalt hear it! When from Alp to
 Alp
 Flaming the fiery beacons skyward leap,
 The tyrants' massy strongholds fall asunder,
 Then pilgrims to thine hut the Swiss shall
 wander,
 And in thine ear shall tell the joyful story,
 And on thy darkness day shall dawn in glory!
[*They separate.*]

ACT II

SCENE I

BARONIAL HALL OF THE THANE OF ATTINGHAUSEN.

*A Gothic hall, adorned with scutcheons and helmets.
 The THANE, a gray-headed old man of eighty-five years, of lofty, noble stature, leaning on a staff, whose handle is a chamois horn, and clad in a fur doublet; KUONI and six other MEN-SERVANTS with rakes and scythes. Enter ULRICH VON RUDENZ in knightly attire.*

RUDENZ

Here am I, uncle. What is your good will?

ATTINGHAUSEN

Let me, as is the house's ancient custom,
First share the morning-cup with my retainers.

[*He drinks from a goblet, which there-
upon goes the round.*]

Aforetime I myself in field and wood
Was with them, with mine eye their industry
Directing, even as they my banner bore
I' the front of battle. Now I can but play
The steward. If the warm sun come not to me,
I can no longer seek him on the mountain.
And so in narrow and yet narrower round
Towards the narrowest and last, where life
Stands altogether still, slowly I move,
Now but my shadow, shortly but my name.

KUONI, *to Rudenz with the goblet*

I pledge you, my young Master.

[*As Rudenz hesitates to take the goblet.*]

Drink it off!

From one glass comes the pledge, and from one
heart.

ATTINGHAUSEN

Go, children! In the evening holiday
We will discuss the welfare of the land.

[*Exeunt retainers.*]

ATTINGHAUSEN *and* RUDENZ

ATTINGHAUSEN

I see thee girt and harnessed. Whither lies
Thy road? To Altorf, to the Landgrave's
Castle?

RUDENZ

Aye, uncle, and I may not longer tarry.

ATTINGHAUSEN, *sitting down*

So hasty art thou? What, unto thy youth
Is time with such a niggard hand doled out
That thou must grudge it to thine aged uncle?

RUDENZ

I see you have no longer need of me.
I am a stranger only in this house.

ATTINGHAUSEN

[*Looking him through and through.*]

Aye, pity 'tis, thou art! Aye, pity 'tis,
Thine house to thee a foreign land is grown.
Ah! Uli, Uli, now no more I know thee.
In silk thou prankest, thou dost proudly flaunt
The peacock's feather, and the purple mantle
About thy shoulders fling. Thou dost despise
The peasant, and his simple-hearted greeting
Doth put thee out of countenance.

RUDENZ

The honour
That is his due, I give him fain; the right
He takes unto himself, I do refuse him.

ATTINGHAUSEN

Beneath the heavy anger of the king
The whole land lies, and no good man and true
But for the tyrannous violence we suffer
Is sad at heart. Thee only touches not
The universal anguish. Thee we see
A recreant to thine own, taking thy stand
Beside thy country's foes, of our distress
Making thy mock, pursuing idle pleasures,
And courting princes' favour, this the while
Thy land lies bleeding 'neath the heavy scourge.

RUDENZ

The land is sore oppressed! Wherefore, mine
uncle?

Who is't hath plunged it into such distress?
'Twould cost them but a single easy word
To rid them in a moment of this burden,
And win to boot a gracious Emperor.
Woe unto them that blind the people's eyes
And set them stiffly 'gainst their truest weal!
For selfish ends the Woodsteads they withhold
Lest they should take the oath to Austria,
As all the lands about nathless have done.
Their pride it flatters on the gentles' seat
To bench beside the nobleman—the Emperor
They wish for lord that they may have no lord.

ATTINGHAUSEN

Must I indeed hear that, and from thy lips?

RUDENZ

Me have you challenged, let me say my say.
What part, mine uncle, is it you yourself
Play here? Have you no loftier pride, than here
To be the Landreeve and the Bannerknight
And in the company of herdsmen rule?
What, is it not a more illustrious choice
To do allegiance to our royal lord
And join his brilliant court, than to be peer
To your own henchmen, and with peasants sit
At judgment?

ATTINGHAUSEN

Ah me! Uli, Uli, well

I know that voice, the tempter's voice! It
seized

Thine open ear, thine heart it hath empoisoned.

RUDENZ

Aye, I'll not hide it! To my very soul
 Cuts me the strangers' taunt, that scoffing rate us
 Peasant-nobility. I cannot brook
 The while the noble youth all round about me
 'Neath Hapsburg's banners win renown, to live
 Here on my heritage in idle leisure,
 And lose the spring of life in mean day-labour.
 Elsewhere are deeds done, and a world of fame
 In glancing tumult stirs beyond these mountains.
 My helm and shield hang rusting in the hall.
 The battle-trumpet's spirited alarm,
 The herald's cry that summons to the joust,
 Pierce not unto these vales, wherein I hear
 Naught but the song that leads the ranks of kine,
 And changeless clanking of the cattle-bells.

ATTINGHAUSEN

Misguided boy, dazzled by idle splendour!
 Disdain thy birthland! Aye, blush for thy
 fathers'
 Time-honoured, pious customs. Yet shall come
 The day when thou with burning tears shalt
 yearn
 Towards thine home, the mountains of thy
 fathers.
 And this same song that leads the wandering
 herds,
 Which thou in haughty surfeit dost despise,
 With aching yearning shall lay hold on thee,
 When upon foreign soil it greets thine ear.
 O! mighty is the love of fatherland!
 The foreign, faithless world is not for thee.
 There at the proud imperial court thou'lt be

A stranger to thyself and thy true heart.
 Far other virtues doth the world require
 Than thou in these sequestered vales hast
 learned.

Nay, get thee gone, and sell thine own free soul ;
 Take land in fee ! Become a princes' slave !
 When thou canst be thine own lord, and a prince
 On thine own heritage and free domain.

Ah ! Uli, Uli, stay with thine own folk !
 Go not to Altorf ! Oh, abandon not
 The holy cause of country ! Of my line
 I am the last, with me my name will end.
 There hang my shield and helmet—they will
 pass

Into the grave with me. And must I think
 With my last breath, that thou dost but await
 My glazing eye, to seek this new-born fee-court,
 And these my noble lands, that free from God
 I held, to take again from Austria ?

RUDENZ

Vainly we set ourselves against the king.
 The world belongs to him—shall we alone
 Stiffen and brace ourselves with headstrong will
 To break in his despite the chain of lands
 That he with might and main hath linked around
 us ?

His are the markets, his the law-courts, his
 The merchant-highroads—nay, the very pack-
 horse

That traverses the Gothard, pays him toll !
 We in his lands as in a net immeshed,
 Are compassed round about on every side.
 And will the Empire shield us ? Can it shield
 Itself against the growing might of Austria ?

Helps us not God, no Emperor can help us !
 And who can build upon the Emperors' word,
 When they in dearth of money, stress of war,
 The towns at will that 'neath the Eagle's wings
 Have refuge sought, may pawn and from the
 Empire

Estrange? Nay, uncle, benefit it is
 And prudent forethought, in these grievous
 times

Of party-strife, unto a powerful head
 To link one's destinies. Th' imperial crown
 Passes from princely house to princely house,
 It hath no memory for loyal service ;
 But to deserve well of the mighty lords
 That hand their honours down from sire to son,
 That is to scatter seed into the future.

ATTINGHAUSEN

So wise thou art? And dost thou plume thy-
 self

To see more clearly than thy noble fathers,
 Who for the priceless jewel of their freedom
 Staked lands and life, and fought as heroes
 fight?

Unto Lucerne take ship, ask there how weighs
 Upon the lands the sway of Austria.
 To count our sheep and cattle will they come,
 To parcel out our Alps, on bird and beast
 In our free woods to set their ban, their toll-bar
 Before our bridges and our gates to plant,
 The lands they purchase with our poverty
 To pay, and with our blood the wars they wage.
 Nay, must we set our blood upon the hazard,
 Why, be it for ourselves! We may buy freedom
 At a less price than slavery.

RUDENZ

What can we,

A folk of shepherds, matched with Albrecht's
army?

ATTINGHAUSEN

Learn thou to know this folk of shepherds, boy !
I know it. I have led it in the front
Of battle, at Faventia seen it fight.
Nay, let them come to force on us a yoke
That we are well-resolved we will not bear.
Oh, learn to know of what a stock thou art.
Fling not for idle splendour, tinsel-show,
The genuine pearls of thine own worth away.
To be acknowledged head of a free folk
That loyally unto thy side doth rally
In battle and in death, be that thy pride ;
Of that nobility make thou thy boast ;
Draw close the bonds that birth itself did knit ;
Cleave to the dearly-loved, the father-land ;
Hold fast to that with all thine heart and soul !
Here are the firm roots whence thy strength is
drawn.

There in the strange world wilt thou stand alone,
A swaying reed, that any storm may snap.
O come, 'tis long since thou hast looked on us,
Bear with us but one day ! But this one day
Go not to Altorf ! Hear'st thou ? Not to-day !
This one day only give thyself to thine !

[*He grasps his hand.*

RUDENZ

I gave my word, let be ! In sooth I'm bound !

ATTINGHAUSEN, *letting loose his hand, earnestly*
 In sooth thou'rt bound! Aye, hapless lad, in
 sooth
 Thou art, but not by word and oath.
 Bound art thou hand and foot, by love's strong
 cord!

[*Rudenz turns away.*]

Dissemble as thou wilt, the Damosel,
 Bertha of Bruneck 'tis that to the Castle
 Draws thee, enchains thee to the Emperor's
 service.
 The Lady Bertha thou dost think to win
 By treason to thy country's cause, be not de-
 ceived!
 To draw thee on they flaunt the bride before thee,
 She is not meant for thy simplicity!

RUDENZ

Enough I've heard! I pray you, give me
 leave! [Exit.]

ATTINGHAUSEN

Thou frantic lad, remain! He goes his way!
 Vainly I seek to stay him, or to save him.
 So he of Wolfenschiessen from his country
 Did fall away, so others too will follow.
 The foreign glamour tears our youth away
 With mighty potency, across our mountains.
 O evil hour, when came an alien world
 Into the tranquil bliss of these still vales
 To blight our customs' pious innocence!
 The New doth mightily press in, the Old,
 The once Revered departs, the times are changed.
 There lives a race whose thoughts are not our
 thoughts.

What do I here? They all are sepulchred
 With whom I held my sway and lived my life.
 Beneath the earth already lies my time;
 Happy who needs no more with the new time
 to live! [Exit.

SCENE II

A MEADOW, ENCLOSED BY HIGH CLIFFS AND WOOD.

On the cliffs are climbing paths with handrails and ladders, from which the country-folk are later seen descending. In the background appears the lake, over which at first a lunar-rainbow is seen. The scene is closed by high mountains, behind which tower still higher snowclad peaks. Deep night lies over the scene, only the lake and the white glaciers gleam in the moonlight.

[MELCHTHAL, BAUMGARTEN, WINKELRIED, MEIER VON SARNEN, BURKHART AM BÜHEL, ARNOLD VON SEWA, KLAUS VON DER FLÜE, and four other countrymen all armed.

MELCHTHAL, *still behind the scene*

The mountain - pathway opens. Follow me boldly.

I see the cliff, whereon the cross doth stand.

This is our goal, here is the Rütli.

[They enter with torches.

WINKELRIED

Hark!

SEWA

Quite émpy!

MEIER

Here's no landsman yet. We are
The first upon the ground, we Unterwaldners.

MELCHTHAL

How far gone is the night?

BAUMGARTEN

The fire-watchman
Of Selisberg hath just cried two.

[*A distant chiming is heard.*]

MEIER

Hush! Hark!

AM BÜHEL

Clear rings across the lake the matin-bell.
From Schwyz 'tis, from the Chapel in the Wood.

VON DER FLÜE

The air is clear and bears the sound so far.

MELCHTHAL

Go some and kindle brushwood. Let it blaze
With a clear flame, whenas the men draw near.

[*Two country-folk go.*]

SEWA

'Tis a fair moonlit night. The lake lies there
As motionless as 'twere a polished mirror.

AM BÜHEL

'Twill cost them little toil to cross.

WINKELRIED, *pointing to the lake*

Ha, look!

Look yonder, see ye naught?

MEIER

What, pray? Aye, marry,
A rainbow in the middle of the night!

MELCHTHAL

The light o' the moon it is that fashions it.

VON DER FLÜE

That is a rare and wondrous portent! Many
There be that ne'er have looked upon the like!

SEWA

'Tis double! Look, a paler stands abōve it.

BAUMGARTEN

Beneath it even now a shallop glides.

MELCHTHAL

'Tis Stauffacher that joins us with his boat.
The trusty heart! Not long he lets us wait.
[*Goes to the shore with Baumgarten.*]

MEIER

The men of Uri 'tis that tarry longest.

AM BÜHEL

They needs must fetch a compass through the
mountains,
That they may surely foil the Landgrave's spies.
[*Meanwhile the two country-folk have
kindled fire in the middle of the
clearing.*]

MELCHTHAL, *on the shore*

Who goes there? Give the word!

STAUFFACHER, *from below*

Friends of the land !

[*All go up the scene to meet the newcomers. From the boat step STAUFFACHER, ITEL REDING, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JÖRG IM HOFE, CONRAD HUNN, ULRICH THE SMITH, JOST VON WEILER, and three other LANDSMEN, also armed.*

ALL, *shouting*

Welcome !

[*Whilst the rest stay in the background and greet each other, Melchthal and Stauffacher come forward.*

MELCHTHAL

O Master Stauffacher, him have I
Looked on, that could not look on me again !
This hand of mine upon his eyes have laid,
And from that quenched sun that was his gaze
The burning lust of vengeance have I sucked.

STAUFFACHER

Speak not of vengeance ! Not to avenge what's
done,
But threatened evil do we seek to counter.
Say now, what have you done in Unterwalden ?
What have you for the common cause achieved ?
How think the land-folk yonder, how have you
Escaped yourself the toils of treason safely ?

MELCHTHAL

Through the wild mountains of the dread
Surrenes,

O'er the far-stretching desolate fields of ice,
 Where the hoarse-throated vulture only croaks,
 I won the Alpine pasture, where the herds
 From Engelberg and Uri, loud-hallooing
 Each other hail, and feed their flocks in common ;
 My thirst allaying with the glaciers' milk
 That in the gullies gushes foaming down.
 Into the lonely shepherds' huts I turned,
 Both host and guest in one, until I reached
 Abodes of men that live companionably.
 Already in these dales was noised abroad
 The fame of the new horror that was wrought,
 And pious reverence mine ill-fortune won me
 At every door whereon I wandering knocked.
 I found these honest souls hot with resentment
 At this new regiment of violence,
 For, as their Alpine pastures on and on
 Still breed the selfsame herbs, their fountains
 flow

Monotonous, their very clouds and winds
 The selfsame course immutably pursue,
 So hath the ancient custom here lived on
 Unchanged from sire to son. They will not
 stomach

A rash presumptuous innovation in
 The old-used even tenour of their life.
 Their horny hands they proffered to my clasp,
 Down from the wall, whereas they hung, they
 reached
 Their rusty swords, and in their eyes there
 flashed

A joyous courage, when I named the names
 The peasant in the highlands sacred holds,
 E'en yours and Walter Fürst's. What to your
 judgment

Approved itself for right, that did they swear
 To do—they swore to follow you to death.
 So sped I safely 'neath the sacred shield
 Of hospitality, from farm to farm ;
 And as I came into my native valley
 Where scattered far and wide my kinsmen dwell,
 And found my father, destitute and blind,
 Couched on the stranger's straw, living on alms
 Of charitable men—

STAUFFACHER

Thou God in Heaven !

MELCHTHAL

Then wept I not ! Nay, not in impotent
 Tears did I spill the strength of mine hot
 anguish.

Deep in my breast, like to a precious treasure,
 I locked it close, and only thought on deeds.
 I crawled through every winding of the moun-
 tain,

No dale so hidden but I spied it out ;
 Up to the very glacier's ice-bound foot
 I looked to find, and found, the huts of men.
 And everywhere I met the selfsame hatred
 Of tyranny, where'er my footsteps bore me,
 For even to the very utmost confines
 Of animate creation, where her bounty
 The stark earth no more yields, the Landgraves'
 greed

Plunders. The hearts of all these trusty folk
 The sting of my discourse hath stirred to
 passion.

Ours are they to a man with heart and lips.

STAUFFACHER

In a brief space great ends have you achieved.

MELCHTHAL

I did still more. The two strongholds it is,
 Rossberg and Sarnen, that the peasant dreads ;
 For in their flinty bulwarks finds the foe
 Sure covert whence to devastate the land.
 With mine own eyes I wished to spy them
 out.

I went to Sarnen, and I saw the Castle.

STAUFFACHER

Yourself into the tiger's very den
 You did adventure ?

MELCHTHAL

There I went disguised
 In pilgrim's weeds. The Landgrave at the
 banquet
 I saw carousing—judge if I can tame
 My heart. I saw the foe, and slew him not !

STAUFFACHER

Verily, Fortune smiled upon your daring.

[*Meanwhile the rest of the country folk
 have come forward and approach
 the two.*]

But name to me the friends and righteous men
 That come with you. Make me acquainted with
 them,
 That we with mutual trust and confidence
 May draw together and unlock our hearts.

MEIER

Who is there knows not you, Sir, i' the three
lands ?

I am called Meier von Sarnen, and this man
My sister's son is, Struth von Winkelried.

STAUFFACHER

You name to me no unfamiliar name.
A Winkelried it was that slew the dragon
I' the Weiler fen, and in that fray his life
Laid down.

WINKELRIED

That was my forbear, Master Werner.

MELCHTHAL, *pointing to two countrymen*

These dwell behind the wood. They're abbey-
folk
Of Engelberg. You will not therefore slight
them
That they are serfs, nor like ourselves, dwell
free
On their paternal heritage. They love
The country, and are else of good report.

STAUFFACHER, *to the two*

Give me your hands. That man is to be envied
That of his body is thrall to none on earth.
Yet honesty in every soil can thrive.

CONRAD HUNN

This is our sometime landreeve, Master Reding.

MEIER

I know him well. He is mine adversary ;
He hath a suit with me, touching a field
That hath been in my family for years.

In court, good Master Reding, we are foes ;
Here we have but one mind.

[*He shakes him by the hand.*]

STAUFFACHER

Gallantly spoken !

WINKELRIED

Hear ye ! They come. Hark to the horn of
Uri !

[*To right and to left armed men bearing
blazing torches are seen descending
the cliffs.*]

AUF DER MAUER

See, comes not down with them the pious
servant

Of God, the reverend pastor ? He nor fears
The weary road nor terrors of the night,
A faithful shepherd, mindful of his flock.

BAUMGARTEN

The sacristan and Master Walter Fürst
Follow him, but I see not Tell i' the throng.

Enter WALTER FÜRST, RÖSSELMANN
THE PARISH PRIEST, PETERMANN
THE SACRISTAN, KUONI THE
HERDSMAN, WERNI THE HUNTS-
MAN, RUODI THE FISHER, *and five*
other COUNTRYMEN. *The whole*
company, thirty-three in number,
come forward and take their
places around the fire.

WALTER FÜRST

So must we on our own inheritance
And soil ancestral, in such furtive wise

Together steal as murderers are wont,
 And under cover of the night, that lends
 To felonies and sun-avoiding complots
 Her inky mantle, our good right must seek,
 That nathless is crystal-clear and bright
 As is the radiant open lap of day.

MELCHTHAL

It matters not. What gloomy night hath spun,
 Jocund and free shall seek the light o' the sun!

RÖSSELMANN

Hear ye what God into mine heart hath put,
 Co-leaguers. For a Folk-moot here we stand,
 And a whole people rightfully present.
 Then let us, following the ancient custom
 Of this our land, a diet hold, as we
 In peaceful times are wont. What lawless is
 In our assembly, shall the times' constraint
 Extenuate, yet God is everywhere
 Where justice is administered, and we
 Beneath His Heaven stand.

STAUFFACHER

Well spoken! Let us,
 As ancient custom bids, a diet hold!
 Albeit night, our right shines clear as day.

MELCHTHAL

What though the tale be not complete! the
 heart
 Of the whole folk is here, the best are present.

CONRAD HUNN

What though the ancient books be not at hand!
 Upon the tables of our hearts they're writ.

RÖSSELMANN

Come then, and straightway let us form the ring
And plant erect the swords of Majesty.

AUF DER MAUER

And let the Landreeve duly take his place,
And let his beadles stand at either side.

SACRISTAN

There are three peoples of us. Whose the
right
The head to furnish to our parliament?

MEIER

Let Schwyz contend with Uri for this honour.
We men of Unterwalden waive the claim.

MELCHTHAL

We waive the claim. We are petitioners
That crave assistance from our powerful friends.

STAUFFACHER

Let Uri take the sword then! Uri's banner
The imperial procession Romeward leads.

WALTER FÜRST

The honour of the sword be Schwyz's lot.
Sprung from its stock we boast us, one and all.

RÖSSELMANN

This generous rivalry let me compose.
In council Schwyz, in battle Uri lead!

WALTER FÜRST, *hands the swords to Stauffacher*
Take these then!

STAUFFACHER

Not to me, to age the honour.

IM HOFE

Ulrich the Smith hath longest tale of years.

AUF DER MAUER

A stalworth man—yet not of free condition.
No bondsman can be rightful judge in Schwyz.

STAUFFACHER

Here Master Reding stands, the sometime
Landreeve.

What need have we to seek a worthier ?

WALTER FÜRST

He shall be Reeve and head of this our Diet.
Who is agreed, let him lift up his hand.

[*All lift up their right hand.*]

REDING, *steps into the middle.*

My hand upon the books I cannot lay,
So by yon everlasting stars I swear
That from the right I will not swerve a hair !

[*The two swords are set up before him,
the ring is formed round about him,
Schwyz occupies the middle, Uri
takes the right and Unterwalden
the left. He stands leaning upon
his battle-sword.*]

What is't, that the three peoples of the mountain,
Here on the lake's inhospitable margent
Doth bring together, in the witching hour ?
What shall the tenor be of the new league
That here beneath the starry heavens we stablish ?

STAUFFACHER, *stepping into the ring*

We stablish no new league, we but renew
 An old old covenant from the fathers' time.
 Friends and co-leaguers, know, although the
 lake,
 Although the mountains sunder us, although
 Each people by itself itself doth rule,
 Yet are we of one stock and of one blood,
 The selfsame home it was wherefrom we
 marched.

WINKELRIED

'Tis true, then, what the ancient ballads tell
 That from afar into the land we wandered?
 Oh, what you know thereof impart to us,
 That the new league upon the old may lean.

STAUFFACHER

Hear what the aged herdsmen tell each other.
 —There was a mighty people, deep i' the land
 Towards the North, that suffered grievous
 famine.
 In this distress the folk-moot did resolve
 That of the burghers every tenth by lot
 Should quit his fatherland, and so 'twas done.
 Forth marched with lamentations men and
 women,
 A mighty host, towards the noonday-sun,
 Hewing their way athwart the German-land
 With their good swords, until they reached the
 highlands
 Of these same forest mountains. Neither
 wearied
 Their march, until they came to the wild valley

Where now betwixt the meadows Muotta runs.
 Here did they see no traces of mankind.
 Only a hut stood lonely on the shore.
 There sat a man and tended on the ferry.
 The lake ran high and on its billowy breast
 No boat might live. Then looked they on the
 land

More nearly, and of goodly wealth of timber
 They were aware, and came upon fair springs,
 And weened that in their own dear fatherland
 They found themselves again. There they
 resolved

To stay, and built the ancient town of Schwyz.
 And many a toilsome day they had, or e'er
 The wood with all its spreading tangled roots
 Was cleared. Then when the soil no more
 sufficed

The number of the folk, they passed across
 To the Black Mountains, nay, to Whiteland
 even,

Where, hid behind the eternal wall of ice,
 Another people speaks in other tongues.
 The town of Stanz they built beside the Kern-
 wood,

The town of Altorf in the valley of Reuss,
 Yet ever mindful were they of their source.
 From all the foreign stocks that since those days
 Have settled in their midst within their borders,
 The Switzers find each other lightly. Heart
 And blood cry out with no uncertain voice.

[*Holds out his hands to right and to
 left.*

AUF DER MAUER

Aye, of one heart we are, and of one blood.

ALL, *holding out their hands to one another*

We are one people! We will act as one!

STAUFFACHER

The other peoples bear the foreign yoke.
 They have submitted them unto the victor.
 Within the very confines of our land
 Live many settlers bound to others' service,
 That hand their bondage on unto their children.
 But we, the ancient Switzers' true-bred stock,
 Have kept our liberty inviolate.
 Under no princes have we bent the knee.
 Of our free will we chose the Emperor's shield.

RÖSSELMANN

Freely we chose the Emperor's shield and
 shelter.
 So it stands writ in Emperor Frederick's charter.

STAUFFACHER

For lordless is the freest not. Of force
 An overlord must be, a judge supreme
 And fountain-head of justice in contentions.
 And therefore did our fathers, for the soil
 That from the ancient wilderness they wrested,
 Yield homage to the Emperor, who styles him
 Lord of the German and the Roman world,
 And like the other freemen of the realm
 Did pledge themselves to noble warlike service,
 For *that* the freeman's only duty is,
 To shield the Empire, that doth shield himself.

MELCHTHAL

What more is, is the brand of servitude.

STAUFFACHER

They followed, when the call to arms went
 forth,
 The banner of the Empire, fought its battles.
 Harnessed, they joined the march to Italy
 To set the Roman crown upon his head.
 At home they ruled themselves right happily,
 Guided by ancient use and native laws.
 The right of life and death alone pertained
 Unto the Emperor. Therewith was invested
 A mighty earl, that dwelt not in the land.
 When bloodguilt came, then was he summoned
 hither,
 And 'neath the open heavens, blunt and clear,
 Delivered justice, without fear of men.
 Where are there traces here that we be bonds-
 men?
 Can any here gainsay me, let him speak!

IM HOFE

Nay, even so stands all as you have said.
 Enforcéd lordship never have we suffered.

STAUFFACHER

Unto the Emperor's self we did deny
 Obedience, when in favour of the priests
 The right he wrenched. When to our grazing-
 ground
 That we had pastured since our fathers' days
 The abbey of Einsiedel laid a claim,
 The abbot drew an ancient charter forth
 That granted him the waste, the no-man's land,
 For our existence had they hidden from him.
 Then did we speak: By fraud the deed was
 gotten!

The primal state of nature comes again
 When man his fellow man confronting stands,
 And in the last resort, where other means
 Will naught avail, the sword is given him.
 The highest good we rightly may defend
 Against the assaults of violence. We stand
 For country, for our wives we stand, our
 children.

ALL, striking on their swords

For country, for our wives we stand, our
 children!

RÖSSELMANN, stepping into the ring

Bethink ye well, ere ye unsheathe the sword.
 Ye yet can make your peace with Austria.
 'Twill cost you but one word and these same
 tyrants
 That now oppress ye sore, will fawn on you.
 Take what is offered, from the Empire sever,
 And own the suzerainty of Austria.

AUF DER MAUER

What says the priest? We swear to Austria!

AM BÜHEL

Hear him not!

WINKELRIED

'Twas a traitor counselled that!
 His country's foe!

REDING

Peace, comrades!

SEWA

We, do homage
To Austria, after such shameful outrage!

VON DER FLÜE

We, yield to violence what to gentleness
We did deny! Then were we slaves indeed,
And had but our deserts in slavery!

AUF DER MAUER

Let him be thrust from out the Switzers' law
That of submission speaks to Austria!
Landreeve, I'll urge it to the test. Be this
The first law of the land that here we pass.

MELCHTHAL

So be't! Who of submission speaks to Austria
Be outlawed and disfranchised of all honours.
No yeoman give him room upon his hearth.

ALL, raising their right hands

It is our will that this be law!

REDING, after a pause

It is law!

RÖSSELMANN

Now are ye free, this law hath made you free.
By violence shall Austria not wring
What unto gentle suasion was not granted.

JUST VON WEILER

On to the order of the day!

REDING

Bethink ye,

Comrades, hath every peaceful means been tried?
 Haply the king is not informed of it.
 Belike 'tis not his will, what now we suffer.
 This last resource we must not leave untried,
 But pour our grievances into his ear
 Ere we unsheathe the sword. Appalling ever
 E'en in a righteous cause is violence.
 Then only God helps, when man helps no
 longer!

STAUFFACHER *to Conrad Hunn*

Now it is yours to tell your story. Speak!

CONRAD HUNN

I went to Rheinfeld, to the Emperor's palace,
 Against the harsh oppression of the Landgraves
 To make complaint, and to bear back with me
 The charter of our ancient liberties,
 Which each new king hath hitherto confirmed.
 The envoys there I found of many cities,
 From Swabia and from the course o' the Rhine,
 Who all received their parchments and returned
 Each man into his country, glad at heart.
 But me, your envoy, did they to the councils
 Put off, and these dismissed me with cold
 comfort:

“The Emperor had no leisure at this time,
 One of these days, belike, he'd think of us.”
 And as with downcast heart the halls I threaded
 Of the King's castle, saw I Archduke John
 Stand weeping in an oriel, about him
 The noble lords of Wart and Tegerfeld,
 Who called to me and said: Help ye yourselves!

Look not for justice at the Emperor's hands.
 Doth he not spoil his very brother's child
 And keep from him his rightful seignory?
 The duke implored from him his mother's lands;
 He was now come of age, it was high time
 That he himself should rule his land and liege-
 men.

What took he for his pains? A garland sets me
 The Emperor on his head. Be that, quoth he,
 The adornment of thy youth!

AUF DER MAUER

Ye have heard it. Look not
 For right and justice at the Emperor's hands.
 Help ye yourselves!

REDING

Naught else is left to us.
 Give counsel now, how to a happy issue
 Most prudently our venture we may guide.

WALTER FÜRST, *stepping into the ring*

We purpose to cast off a hateful yoke.
 Our ancient rights, unchanged, as from our
 fathers
 We did inherit them, we will maintain,
 Not with unbridled passion grasp at new ones.
 What is the Emperor's still remain the Em-
 peror's.
 Who hath a lord, still do him due allegiance.

MEIER

I hold my lands from Austria in fee.

WALTER FÜRST

Then you will still to Austria do service.

JOST VON WEILER

I to the Lords of Rappersweil pay tribute.

WALTER FÜRST

Then you will still your tax and tribute pay.

RÖSSELMANN

To the great Lady of Zürich I am oath-plight.

WALTER FÜRST

What is the Abbey's, render to the Abbey!

STAUFFACHER

I hold no fief from any save the Empire.

WALTER FÜRST

What must be, be that done, but nothing more.
 The Landgraves with their henchmen will we
 drive
 Forth of the land, their strongholds will we
 shatter,
 Yet without bloodshed, if so be we may;
 So will the Emperor see that but constrained
 By desperate need, we have cast off from us
 The pious bonds of reverence. Haply then,
 Seeing we break not our right lawful bounds,
 With prudent policy he'll curb his wrath;
 For when a people, sword in hand, itself
 Doth bridle, then it strikes well-founded fear.

REDING

But say, how shall we carry through our plan?
 The enemy hath weapons in his hand,
 And of a truth in peace he will not yield.

STAUFFACHER

He will, when he sees us with weapons too.
We'll take him unawares, ere he can arm him.

MEIER

'Tis lightly said, but not so lightly done.
Two strongholds tower skywards in our land,
The foe they'll shelter and prove formidable
If that the king upon our land should fall.
Rossberg and Sarnen must be overcome
Before one sword is raised in the three lands.

STAUFFACHER

So long if we delay, the enemy
Will scent our secret out. Too many share it.

MEIER

There is no traitor in the Woodsteads!

RÖSSELMANN

God

Forbid, but zeal well-meant might yet betray us.

WALTER FÜRST

If we put off, the donjon will they finish
In Altorf, and the Landgrave fortify him.

MEIER

Ye think but of yourselves.

SACRISTAN

Ye are unjust.

MEIER, *flaring up*

We are unjust! Shall Uri thus upbraid us?

REDING

Peace! by your oath!

MEIER

Aye, marry! peace! When Schwyz
And Uri are at one, then we perforce
Must hold our peace!

REDING

I must rebuke you here
Before the folk-moot, for that you the peace
With stormy passions mar. Stand we not all
For one same cause?

WINKELRIED

If we delay till Christmas
Then custom hath it that the tenants all
Bring presents to the Landgrave in his castle.
Thus may ten men or twelve within the strong-
hold
Assemble with no shadow of mistrust
And privily bear pointed irons with them
Which they may swiftly set upon their staves,
For no man bearing arms enters the castle.
Hard by i' the wood will our main band the
while
Lie hid, and when the others happily
Have made them masters of the gate, then shall
A horn be blown, and these from out their
ambush
Shall burst, and so with little labour is
The stronghold ours.

MELCHTHAL

And Castle Rossberg I
Will undertake to scale. There is a lass

That favours me. Her will I lightly coax
 To let me down by night the swaying ladder
 That I may visit her. Once up myself
 Quickly I'll draw my friends up after me.

REDING

Is it the will of all that we delay?
 [*The majority raise their hands.*]

STAUFFACHER *counts the votes*

The yeas are twenty, twelve the nays, 'tis
 carried.

WALTER FÜRST

When on the day appointed fall the strongholds
 Mount unto mount shall hand with smoking
 beacons

The signal on. I' the chief town of each land
 The yeomanry shall swiftly stand to arms,
 And when the Landgraves see 'tis armèd earnest
 In sooth they'll have small stomach to the fray,
 And gladly, under peaceful conduct, cross
 The borders of our land.

STAUFFACHER

With Gessler only
 I fear a stubborn stand. He doth maintain
 A formidable band of troopers round him.
 Not without bloodshed will he quit the field.
 Nay, driven forth, he still is to be dreaded!
 'Tis hard, 'tis well-nigh perilous to spare him.

BAUMGARTEN

Where one must venture life in hand, set me!
 To Tell I owe my life, and for my country
 Right cheerfully I'll set it in the breach.
 Mine honour have I safeguarded, contented
 My heart.

REDING

Time fashions counsel. Patiently
 Await. We must trust something to the
 moment.

But see! The while we wear away the night
 In counsel, yonder on the topmost peaks
 Her glowing beacons morning doth appoint.
 Come, let us part, ere daybreak be upon us.

WALTER FÜRST

Fear not! But slowly from these valleys night
 Retreats.

*[All have involuntarily taken off their
 hats, and contemplate the breaking
 day, wrapt in silent thought.]*

RÖSSELMANN

By this fair light that greets us first
 Of all the tribes of men that deep beneath us,
 Heavily-breathing in the reek of towns,
 Their dwelling have, together let us swear
 The oath of this new covenant. *We will be
 One single folk of brothers, in no need
 Will sunder, nor no danger.*

*[ALL repeat it after him, with three
 fingers raised.]*

*We will be
 Free, as our fathers were, and rather death
 Than life in shameful bondage!*

ALL repeat it as above

*We will set
In God Most High our trust. We will not fear
The might of man to hurt us !*

*[ALL repeat it as above and embrace
one another.]*

STAUFFACHER

Now let each
Go quietly his way, back to his friends
And village. He that herdsman is, in peace
Winter his herd, and for the league win com-
rades
Silently. What must needs be borne till then,
Bear it, and let the tyrants' reckoning grow,
Till one same day the universal debt
And the particular in one shall cancel.
His righteous wrath let each man curb with
zeal,
And hoard his vengeance for the common
treasure.
He filches from the universal weal,
That privately doth right his own displeasure.

*[Whilst they go off with the greatest
tranquillity in three several direc-
tions, the orchestra strikes in with
a magnificent burst of music ; the
empty scene remains yet awhile
open, and displays the spectacle of
sunrise over the snow-clad peaks.]*

ACT III

SCENE I

COURTYARD BEFORE TELL'S HOUSE.

TELL *is busy with the carpenter's axe, HEDWIG with some domestic occupation, WALTER and WILLIAM are playing with a small crossbow in the background.*

WALTER, *singing*

*Thorough mount and valleys,
With his shaft and bow,
Forth the archer sallies
At the morn's first glow.*

*As the kite doth hover
King in air's demesne,
He bath lordship over
Mountain and ravine.*

*Far as bolt can carry
His are earth and sky;
All things are his quarry
There that creep and fly.*

[*Comes bounding.*

The cord is snapped in twain. Mend it me, father.

TELL

Not I! A proper archer helps himself.

[*The boys go away.*

HEDWIG

The boys begin to draw the bow betimes.

TELL

Aye, early practice makes the master, wife.

HEDWIG

Ah, would to God they never learnt it!

TELL

'Tis well they should learn all things. He
 that boldly
 Would fight his way through life, must be
 equipped
 For thrust and parry.

HEDWIG

Alas, content at home

Will neither find!

TELL

Mother, no more can I!

Nature hath never framed me for a shepherd.
 Restless must I pursue a fleeting goal,
 For then alone my life hath the right zest,
 When every day I hunt it down anew.

HEDWIG

And little dost thou heed the anxious housewife,
 That frets the while, awaiting thy return.
 Me doth it fill with horror, what the men
 Each other tell of your adventurous rambles.
 At every parting quakes the heart within me
 Lest thou shouldst ne'er come back to me again.
 I see thee in the pathless waste of ice

Bewildered, leap from cliff to cliff, and miss
 Thy foothold ; see the chamois, bounding back,
 Drag thee down with it o'er the precipice.
 I see the gusty avalanche o'erwhelm thee,
 The treacherous crust of snow give way beneath
 thee,

And let thee sink, entombed a living man,
 Into the dismal sepulchre. Woe's me !
 To snare the daring Alpine hunter, Death
 A hundred changing forms puts on. That is
 An ill-starred craft, in jeopardy of life
 That leads along the precipice's brink.

TELL

Who keeps a good look-out with healthy wits,
 And trusts in God and his own supple sinews,
 From every risk and strait will wrest him lightly.
 The mountain hath no terrors for the man
 Was born upon it.

[*Having ended his work, he puts away
 the tool.*

Now methinks the gate
 Is good again for many a long day.
 Keep axe in house and spare the carpenter.

[*He takes his hat.*

HEDWIG

And whither now ?

TELL

To Altorf, to thy father's.

HEDWIG

Hast thou naught dangerous in mind ? Con-
 fess it.

TELL

What put that in thine head?

HEDWIG

There's something brewing
Against the Landgraves. On the Rütli was
A diet held. Thou too art in the league.

TELL

I was not there, but when the country calls
I'll not hang back.

HEDWIG

They'll set thee where is danger.
The hardest task, as ever, will be thine.

TELL

Each man is taxed according to his means.

HEDWIG

'Twas thou didst row the Unterwaldner too
Across the lake in yonder storm. A marvel
It was that ye escaped! Hadst thou no thought
For wife and children then?

TELL

On ye I thought,
Dear wife, and so the father for his children
I saved.

HEDWIG

To put out on the raging lake!
That is not trusting God, but tempting God.

TELL

Who thinks too long, but little will achieve.

HEDWIG

Aye, thou art kind, obliging, serviceable;
 But when thyself art in the pinch, will no man
 Help thee.

TELL

Why God forbid that I should need help!
[Takes the crossbow and arrows.

HEDWIG

What wilt thou with the crossbow? Leave it
 here.

TELL

My hand is wanting when I want my weapon.
[The boys come back.

WALTER

Father, where dost thou go?

TELL

To Altorf, boy,
 To Grand-dad, wilt come with me?

WALTER

Marry will I!

HEDWIG

The Landgrave stays there now. Go not to
 Altorf!

TELL

He leaves to-day.

HEDWIG

Then let him first be gone.
 Thrust not thyself into his memory.
 Thou knowest well he looketh sourly on us.

TELL

His evil will can do us little harm.
I do the right and fear no enemy.

HEDWIG

Them that do right, them doth he chiefly hate.

TELL

Because he cannot come at them. The knight,
I shrewdly think, will meddle not with me.

HEDWIG

Art sure of that ?

TELL

But a brief while ago,
Through the wild gorges of the Schächenthal,
Far from the haunts of men I went a-hunting ;
And as all solitary I pursued
A rocky path, wherefrom to turn aside
Was hopeless, for o'erhead the cliff hung sheer,
And fearsomely the torrent roared beneath,
[*The boys nestle to him to right and
left, and look up to him with eager
curiosity.*

There comes the Landgrave on the road to
meet me.

He quite alone with me, I too alone,
Bare man to man, and by our side the gulf.
And as the gentleman caught sight of me
And knew me, whom a little while before
He had fined heavily for trifling cause,
And saw me with my goodly weapon, come
Striding along, his face grew ashy pale,
His knees quaked under him, at any moment

I looked to see him sink beside the cliff—
 Then I had pity on him, stepped up to him
 In modest wise, and said, "'Tis I, Sir Land-
 grave ; "

But he, alas ! not one poor sound could bring
 Across his lips, but with his hand alone
 In silence, motioned me to go my way,
 And I went on and sent his retinue.

HEDWIG

Before thee hath he trembled ? Woe is thee !
 That thou hast seen him weak he'll never
 pardon.

TELL

Therefore I shun him. Me he will not seek.

HEDWIG

But this day keep away. Go hunting rather.

TELL

What ails thee ?

HEDWIG

I am heartsick, keep away.

TELL

How canst thou vex thee so without a cause ?

HEDWIG

Because there is no cause. Tell, stay at home !

TELL

Dear wife, I've pledged my word that I will
 go.

HEDWIG

Nay, go then, if thou must, but leave the boy
With me.

WALTER

Nay, mother, I am going with father.

HEDWIG

What, Watty, wilt thou leave thy mother then?

WALTER

I'll bring thee something pretty back from Grand-
dad.

[Goes with his father.]

WILLIAM

Mother, I shall stay with thee.

HEDWIG, *clasping him to her*

Aye, thou art
Mine own dear boy, thou'rt all that I have left.

*[She goes to the yard-gate, and follows
the retreating figures for a long
time with her eyes.]*

SCENE II

A WILD WOODLAND

*Closed in on all sides. Foaming cataracts plunge
down from the cliffs.*

*[BERTHA in a hunting-robe. Immedi-
ately afterwards RUDENZ.]*

BERTHA

He follows me. At length I can speak out.

RUDENZ *enters hastily*

Lady, I find you now at length alone.
 Here, in this wild, hemmed in with steep and
 stone,
 I fear no prying eyes. Here from my soul
 The load of this long silence will I roll.

BERTHA

Are you assured the hunt comes not this way?

RUDENZ

The hunt is over yonder ; now or never
 The precious moment must I boldly grasp—
 Decided must I see my fate, e'en should it
 Irrevocably part me from you. Oh,
 Arm not your gracious glances with this frown-
 ing
 Austerity ; nay what am I, that I
 To you my daring wish should lift? Me Fame
 Not yet hath named—I may not take my stand
 Amidst the knightly throng, that conquest-
 crowned
 And glittering, encircle you with homage.
 Naught have I but my heart, brimful of faith
 And love—

BERTHA, *earnestly and severely*

How ill those words beseem your lips,
 You that are faithless to your nearest duties,
 [Rudenz starts back.
 The slave of Austria, that to the stranger
 Have sold yourself, the oppressor of your
 people!

RUDENZ

You, lady, is it you that thus upbraid me?
Whom seek I but yourself upon that side?

BERTHA

Me on the side of treason do you think
To find? My hand I sooner would bestow
On Gessler's self, aye, even on the oppressor,
Than on the unnatural son of Switzerland
That can demean himself to be his tool.

RUDENZ

Oh, God! What do I hear?

BERTHA

How think you? What
To the good man is nearer than his own?
What fairer duties hath a noble heart
Than to be innocency's champion,
And safeguard of the rights of the oppressed?
My heart bleeds for your people—when it suffers
I suffer with it, for I needs must love it,
So unassuming, yet so full of strength.
My heart goes wholly forth to it, each day
I learn yet more to honour it; but you,
You, its protector born, by nature's laws
And knightly oaths, you that abandon it,
Bankrupt in faith, and join the foe, and forge
The fetters for your country, you it is
That wound me, you that hurt me. I must needs
Constrain my heart if I would hate you not.

RUDENZ

What! seek I not my people's weal? Its peace
I seek to stablish 'neath the mighty sceptre
Of Austria.

BERTHA

Its bondage! Liberty
 From the last stronghold left her upon earth
 You seek to drive. The people for its weal
 Hath better understanding. Its sure instinct
 No specious show beguiles. About your head
 The snarer's hand hath cast the blinding toils.

RUDENZ

Bertha! You hate me! You despise me!

BERTHA

Oh!
 'Twere better for me, better far I did!
 But to behold despised and despicable
 Him whom we fain would love—

RUDENZ

Oh, Bertha! Bertha!
 You show me Heaven's highest bliss, and then
 Straightway you dash me to the depths again!

BERTHA

No, no! your nobler nature is not stifled
 Wholly. It doth but slumber. I will wake it!
 You must do violence to yourself to slay
 Your native virtue, yet for your good fortune
 'Tis mightier than you yourself, and you
 Are good and noble in your own despite.

RUDENZ

Oh, Bertha! you believe in me! There's naught
 But I may be, and shall be, through your love.

BERTHA

Be what high nature purposed you to be,
 And fill the place wherein she planted you.

Stand by your people, by your country stand,
Do battle for your sacred rights!

RUDENZ

Woe's me!

How can I win you, hold you for mine own,
If I defy the Emperor's strong arm?
Is not your kinsman's will imperious
The arbiter tyrannic of your hand?

BERTHA

All my estates here in the Woodsteads lie,
And is the Switzer free, free too am I!

RUDENZ

O Bertha, what a glimpse of hope you show me!

BERTHA

Hope not to compass me by Austria's favour.
They stretch their hand out on my heritage;
To merge it in the greater they design.
The selfsame greed of land that would devour
Your liberty, it is that threatens mine.
O, Friend, I am reserved for sacrifice!
Haply to fee some minion of a season.
Me to yon home of intrigue and of treason,
To the imperial court they would entice.
There will a hated wedlock's chains enslave
me,
And love alone it is, your love, can save me!

RUDENZ

You could in truth be minded here to dwell?
Here, in my fatherland, mine own to be?

O, Bertha ! all my yearning to be forth,
 What was it but a striving after you ?
 You only on the paths of fame I sought.
 All my ambition was my love alone.
 Could you resolve with me in this still vale
 From world and worldly pomp yourself to
 sunder,
 Oh, then is found the goal of all my striving.
 Then let the stream of the tempestuous world
 On the safe shore of these our mountains
 thunder !
 No longer any fleeting wish have I
 To send abroad into Life's wastes around us.
 Then let these cliffs that here about us lie,
 With barriers impenetrable bound us,
 And be this cloistered blissful vale alone
 To Heaven open and to Heaven known !

BERTHA

Now art thou wholly what my boding heart
 Hath dreamed, my faith hath not deluded me.

RUDENZ

Hence, idle folly, hence, that didst beguile me !
 Here in mine home my bliss is to be found,
 Here where my boyhood blithely grew to blos-
 som,
 Where round me joyous memories are showered,
 Where every spring, each tree with life is
 dowered,
 E'en here thou wilt be mine. Ah, do not doubt
 it
 I loved it ever, mine own land—I feel
 No bliss on earth were perfect bliss without it.

BERTHA

Where should the islands of the blest be found
 If not in this abode of innocence?
 Here in this native haunt of antique faith,
 That yet no form of falsehood hath enshrouded!
 Our well of bliss no envy here shall foul,
 And ever here the hours shall fleet unclouded.
 Thee shall I see in sterling manly worth,
 First of the free, thy peers, such homage
 gaining,
 Such pure free reverence, no king on earth
 Shall bear more sway, o'er wide dominions
 reigning.

RUDENZ

Thee shall I see, the crown of women all,
 With winsome charm fulfil each woman's duty,
 Create a Heaven in my earthly hall,
 And still adorn my life with grace and beauty,
 As springtide scatters wide its wealth of
 blossom,
 And quickens all, and gladdens every bosom.

BERTHA

See, dear my friend, wherefore it was I
 mourned,
 When this supremest bliss of life I saw
 Thine own hand dash to pieces. Woe is me!
 How were it with me, what a fate were mine,
 The haughty knight, the oppressor of the land
 If I must follow to his gloomy keep!
 Here is no keep, here sunder me no walls
 From a brave folk whose bliss my hand can
 crown.

RUDENZ

But how to free me? How to loose the toils
That mine own folly o'er mine head hath cast?

BERTHA

Rend them in twain with manly resolution.
Come what come may, to thine own people
rally—

That is thy place by right of birth.

[*Hunting horns in the distance.*

The hunt
Draws nearer, we must part, away! Do battle
For Fatherland, thou battlest for thy love.
Before one foe we tremble, all and single,
One liberty shall free us one and all!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

MEADOW NEAR ALTORF.

*In the foreground trees, in the background a hat
on a pole. The perspective is closed by the
Bannberg, above which towers a snow-clad
mountain.*

[*FRIESSHARDT and LEUTHOLD keeping
watch.*

FRIESSHARDT

We keep a bootless watch, there's not a soul
Draws near to do obeisance to the hat.
'Twas busy as a fair here formerly,

But now the green is empty as a desert,
 Since yonder bogey hangs upon the pole.

LEUTHOLD

Naught but a scurvy rabble shows itself,
 Swinging their tattered caps to nettle us.
 The decent folk would liefer fetch a compass
 Half round the town, than here before the hat
 They'd bend their backs.

FRIESSHARDT

At noon-tide, coming from
 The moot-hall, willy-nilly they must cross
 This place. Ha, ha! thinks I, now will I
 make

A famous catch, for none took thought to greet
 The hat, when who should come but Rössel-
 mann

The parson, from a sick-bed as it chanced,
 And sees it all, and with the Holy Host,
 Here, right in front o' the pole he plants himself.
 The Sacristan rings me the sacring-bell,
 And down they drop, all on their marrow-bones,
 I with the rest, and greet—the hat? Nay
 marry,

The monstrance!

LEUTHOLD

Hark ye, mate! It dawns on me
 We stand i' the pillory here afore the hat.
 Nay, 'tis a burning shame a trooper should
 Stand sentinel before an empty hat,
 And every proper fellow must despise us.
 What marry! do obeisance to a hat!
 Nay, by my troth, it is a mad command!

FRIESSHARDT

And why not to an empty hollow hat.
Dost duck thine head to many a hollow skull.

[Enter HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, and
ELSPETH with the children. They
stand round the pole.

LEUTHOLD

And thou art one o' these same pickthank knaves,
And honest folk wouldst fain bring into trouble.
Nay, let who will pass by the hat for me!
I'll screw mine eyes up tight and see him not.

MECHTHILD

There hangs the Landgrave. Have respect, ye
brats!

ELSPETH

Nay, would to God he went, and left his hat!
The country would be none the worse of it.

FRIESSHARDT *drives them away*

Accurséd pack of petticoats! Away!
Who asks for you? Your husbands hither send
If they've a stomach to defy the mandate.

[*Exeunt women.*

[Enter TELL with the cross-bow,
leading the boy by the hand.
They move towards the front of
the scene, passing the hat without
beeding it.

WALTER, *pointing to the Bannberg*

Is it true, father, that the trees that grow
On yonder mountain bleed, if with an axe
A man should gash them?

TELL

Who hath told thee that?

WALTER

The Master Herdsman says they do. The trees
Are charmed, he says, and he that doth them
hurt
His hand will grow from out his grave.

TELL

The trees
Are charmed, and that's the truth. Dost see
yon snows,
Yonder white peaks, that lose themselves in
Heaven?

WALTER

Those are the glaciers that thunder so
At night, and send the avalanches on us.

TELL

Aye, and the avalanches long ago
The town of Altorf 'neath their weight had
buried,
Did not the wood above there like a bulwark
Withstand their onset.

WALTER, *after some reflection*

Father, be there lands
Where are no mountains?

TELL

If a man should go
Down from our heights, and ever deeper down
Along the water-courses, he would come

Into a great flat land, where now no more
 The mountain-torrents brawl along in foam.
 There the smooth stream glides peacefully—the
 glance
 To all four corners of the sky may roam.
 In long fair fields the golden corn grows free, A
 And like a garden is the land to see.

WALTER

Father, why go we not full swiftly down
 To that fair land, instead of worrying
 And toiling here ?

TELL

The land as Heaven itself
 Is fair and kindly, but the folk that till it
 Do not enjoy the increase of the seed
 That their own hand hath planted.

WALTER

Dwell they not
 Free on their own inheritance, as thou dost ?

TELL

The land there is the Bishop's and the King's.

WALTER

But they may hunt at will within the wood ?

TELL

The game, both fur and feather, is the lord's.

WALTER

But they may fish at will within the streams ?

TELL

The stream, the sea, the salt, all are the King's.

WALTER

Who is the King then, whom they all do fear ?

TELL

He that defends them, he that gives them bread.

WALTER

Can they not sturdily defend themselves ?

TELL

Nay, there the neighbour dare not trust his neighbour.

WALTER

Father, I cannot breathe in the wide land.
I'd liefer dwell amongst the avalanches.

TELL

Aye, better have the mountains with their
glaciers
Behind our backs, than evil-minded men.
[They are crossing over.]

WALTER

Look, father ! See the hat there on the pole !

TELL

Why, what's the hat to us ? Come, let us go !
[As he is going off Friesshardt encounters him, holding his pike in front of him.]

FRIESSHARDT

I' the Emperor's name ! Hold ! Stand your ground !

TELL, *seizing the pike*

What would you?
Why seek you to detain me thus?

FRIESSHARDT

You have
Transgressed the mandate. You must follow us.

LEUTHOLD

You have not done obeisance to the hat.

TELL

Friend, let me go!

FRIESSHARDT

Come! Off to prison! Come!

WALTER

What, father go to prison! Help there! Help!

[Calling off the stage.]

Hither, ye men! Good people, hither! Help!
Here's violence! They're dragging him to
prison!

*[Enter RÖSSELMANN THE PASTOR and
PETERMANN THE SACRISTAN with
three other men.]*

SACRISTAN

What is't?

RÖSSELMANN

Why dost lay hands upon this man?

FRIESSHARDT

He is the Emperor's foe! A traitor is he!

TELL, *seizes him roughly*

A traitor, I?

RÖSSELMANN

Thou art mistaken, friend,
This man is Tell, a right good man and true.

WALTER, *sees WALTER FÜRST and runs up to him*
Grandfather, help! They're handling father
roughly.

FRIESSHARDT

Come, off to prison with you!

WALTER FÜRST, *hurrying up*

Hold! I'll be
His warrant. Tell, for God's sake, what hath
chanced?

[*Enter MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER.*

FRIESSHARDT

The Landgrave's sovereign authority
He doth despise, and sets it at defiance.

STAUFFACHER

Tell hath done that?

MELCHTHAL

Thou liest in thy throat!

LEUTHOLD

He hath not done obeisance to the hat.

WALTER FÜRST

Is that why he must go to prison? Friend,
Take thou my warranty, and let him go.

FRIESSHARDT

Warrant thyself and thine own skin! We do
What 'longs unto our office. Off with him!

MELCHTHAL, *to the countryfolk*

Nay, this is crying violence! Shall we brook
To see him insolently led away
Before our very eyes?

SACRISTAN

We are the stronger.
Friends, bear it not! The others here will
back us.

FRIESSHARDT

Who sets himself against the Landgrave's
orders?

THREE OTHER COUNTRYMEN, *hurrying up*

We'll help you. What's the matter? Knock
them down!

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD and ELSPETH
come back.

TELL

Nay now, I'll help myself. Good people, go!
Think ye, had I a mind to use my strength
I'd blench before their halberds?

MELCHTHAL, *to Friesshardt*

Dare to take him
Forth from our midst!

WALTER FÜRST *and* STAUFFACHER

Keep cool, for God's sake! Softly!

FRIESSHARDT, *shrieking out*

Ho! Ho! Riot and rebellion! Ho!
 [Hunting horns are heard.]

WOMEN

There comes
 The Landgrave.

FRIESSHARDT, *raising his voice*

Mutiny! Rebellion! Ho!

STAUFFACHER

Shriek till thou burst, thou scoundrel!

RÖSSELMANN *and* MELCHTHAL

Wilt thou hold
 Thy peace?

FRIESSHARDT, *crying still louder*

Help! help the servants of the law!

WALTER FÜRST

The Landgrave! Woe is me! how will this
 end?

[Enter GESSLER on horseback, with his
 falcon on his wrist, RUDOLPH DER
 HARRAS, BERTHA *and* RUDENZ,
 a great retinue of armed retainers,
 who form a circle of pikes about
 the whole scene.]

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

Room for the Landgrave! Room!

GESSLER

Drive them asunder!
 Why crowd the folk together? Who shouts
 help?

[*General silence.*]

Who was't? Nay, I will know it!

[*To Friesshardt.*]

Thou, stand forth!

Who art thou? Wherefore dost thou hold this
 man?

Speak!

[*Gives his falcon to a retainer.*]

FRIESSHARDT

Dread my lord, I am thy man-at-arms,
 Duly appointed sentry 'fore the hat.
 This man I took i' the very act, whereas
 He did deny due homage to the hat.
 I sought to arrest him, as thou didst command.
 The crowd is fain to rescue him by force.

GESSLER, *after a pause*

Dost hold thine Emperor so lightly, Tell,
 And me that here am Regent in his room,
 That thou deniest reverence to the hat
 Which I hung up to prove your loyalty?
 Thine evil will hast thou betrayed to me.

TELL

Forgive me, good my lord, from heedlessness,
 Not from contempt of you it did befall.
 If I were heedful, Tell were not my name.
 I crave your grace, it shall no more betide.

GESSLER, *after a silence*

Thou art a master with the crossbow, Tell.
Men say thou art a match for any archer.

WALTER

That must be true, for at a hundred paces
An apple from the tree will father shoot thee.

GESSLER

Is that thy boy, Tell?

TELL

Good my lord, it is.

GESSLER

Hast other children?

TELL

Aye, my lord, one boy.

GESSLER

And which amongst them dost thou love most
dearly?

TELL

My lord, both children are like dear to me.

GESSLER

Come then, Tell, thou that at a hundred paces
Strikest the apple from the tree, thy skill
Put to the proof before me. Take thy cross-
bow—

Thou hast it quite at hand—and make thee ready
To shoot an apple from thine urchin's head.
But mark my counsel! Take good aim, that
surely

With the first bolt the apple thou mayst smite,
For if thou miss, thine head is forfeit!

[*All are horror-stricken.*]

TELL

Sir!

What monstrous deed is this you look for from
me?

I, from the head of mine own child must— No!
No, no! dear sir, that is not your intent!
The gracious God forbid! That can you not
Require in sober earnest from a father.

GESSLER

From the boy's head the apple wilt thou shoot!
I do require it, I will have it.

TELL

Must I

Make the beloved head of mine own child
A mark unto my crossbow? Liefer death!

GESSLER

Thou shootest or thou diest *with* thy boy.

TELL

What! Must I be the murderer of my child?
My lord, you have no children, do not know
What feelings stir within a father's breast.

GESSLER

Beshrew me, Tell, but thou art heedful grown
Of a sudden! Thou'rt a dreamer, so they tell
me,
That from the ways of men dost hold aloof.

Thou art a lover of the whimsical,
 And therefore have I sought thee out a feat
 After thine heart. Another might think twice,
 But thou wilt shut thine eyes, and so to work
 With a will.

BERTHA

Nay, jest not, sir, with these poor people.
 You see them stand all pale and trembling there,
 So little used are they to jesting from you.

GESSLER

Who tells ye I am jesting?

[*Reaches up to the branch of a tree that
 hangs above him.*

Here's the apple.

Give room there! Let him take his range, as is
 The custom. Eighty paces do I give him—
 No less, no more. What! at a hundred paces
 He vaunted him that he would hit his man.
 Now, archer, hit! Now shoot not wide o' the
 mark!

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

God, this is bitter earnest! On thy knees,
 And beg the Landgrave, boy, to spare thy life!

WALTER FÜRST, *aside to Melchthal, who can
 scarcely govern his impatience*

Govern yourself, I do entreat you! Still!

BERTHA, *to the Landgrave*

Let it suffice, my lord! It is inhuman
 To trifle with a father's anguish thus.
 Were this poor man by yonder petty fault
 Forfeit in life and limb, by Heaven he hath

Already died ten deaths. Bid him begone
 Unhurt unto his cottage. He hath learned
 To know you. Aye, this hour will bear in
 mind
 He and his children's children.

GESSLER

Make a lane!
 Why dost thou falter? Come! Thy life is
 forfeit,
 My word can slay thee! Yet I lay thy fate
 Graciously into thine own practised hand.
 He cannot murmur that his doom is harsh
 That hath been 'pointed master of his fate.
 Thou vauntest thy sure glance. Nay, then!
 Come on!
 Now, archer, is the time to show thy skill.
 The mark is worthy thee, the prize is great.
 To hit the black i' the target—marry, that
 Can any man! But he's the master, look you,
 That of his skill is everywhere like sure,
 Whose heart nor lames his hand nor dims his
 eye.

WALTER FÜRST, *casts himself down at his feet*

Sir Landgrave, your authority we own.
 Yet oh! let mercy triumph over justice!
 Take half of all I have! Nay, take it all,
 But free a father from this monstrous task!

WALTER TELL

Grandfather, kneel not to the evil man!
 Where shall I take my stand? I'm not afraid.
 Why, father hits the bird upon the wing;
 He'll not shoot wide into his own child's heart.

STAUFFACHER

Sir Landgrave, doth his artlessness not touch
you?

RÖSSELMANN

Bethink you that in Heaven is a God,
Before whom you must answer all your deeds!

GESSLER, *points to the boy*

One of ye bind the boy to yonder lime-tree.

WALTER TELL

What? Bind me! Nay, I'll not be bound.
I'll stand
Still as a lamb. I will not even breathe.
But if you bind me, nay, I could not so!
I could not choose but strive against my bonds.

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

But let them bind thine eyes, boy!

WALTER TELL

Why mine eyes?
Think ye I fear the bolt from father's hand?
I will await it steadfastly, I will not
Quiver an eyelash. Father, let them see
Thou art an archer. He will not believe thee.
He thinks he will undo us. Shoot and hit
And spite the tyrant!

[*Goes to the limetree. The apple is laid
on his head.*]

MELCHTHAL, *to the countryfolk*

Shall this monstrous deed
Be done before our eyes? Whereto our oath?

STAUFFACHER

'Tis all in vain. We have no arms! Ye see
The bristling wood of pikes that girds us round.

MELCHTHAL

Would we had done't i' the heat of our resolve!
May God forgive the men that bid delay.

GESSLER, *to Tell*

To work! 'Tis not for naught a man bears
arms.

'Tis perilous to bear a deadly weapon.
Upon the archer's self the bolt recoils.
This haughty right the peasant takes, a slight
It is upon the sovereign lord o' the land.
Arméd be none, save him that rules alone.
And if ye for your pleasure bear the bow
And shaft, why marry, I will set your mark!

TELL, *bends the crossbow, and fits the bolt to it*

Make me a lane! Give room!

STAUFFACHER

What, Tell? You would—nay, never! Why,
you're trembling!
Your hand is all ashake! Your knees are totter-
ing!

TELL, *lets the crossbow sink*

All swims before mine eyes!

WOMEN

Thou God in Heaven!

TELL, *to Landgrave*

Spare me the shot! And see! here is my heart!

[*Tears open his bosom.*

Call on your troopers—hew me to the ground!

GESSLER

I will not have thy life! I'll have the shot!

Thou art a master, Tell, of every craft!

In every danger art thou undismayed!

The rudder thou dost wield, e'en as the bow!

No storm can daunt thee, is a saviour needed.

Now saviour, save thyself—thou savest all!

TELL, *stands torn asunder by conflicting emotions, his hands twitching, his rolling eyes now turned upon the Landgrave, now to Heaven. Suddenly he lays hold of his quiver, draws forth a second arrow and sticks it in his jerkin. The Landgrave observes all these gestures*

WALTER TELL, *under the limetree*

Shoot away, father! I am not afraid!

TELL

It must be!

[*He collects himself and takes aim.*

RUDENZ, *who all the time has stood in the greatest tension, and restrained himself by force, steps forward*

Sir Landgrave, further will you urge it not!

You will not! You have put him to the proof.

You have fulfilled your purpose; overstrained

Severity doth miss her prudent aim,

And all too tensely strung, the bow will snap.

GESSLER

You'll hold your tongue till you are bid to
speak!

RUDENZ

I have the right to speak, and speak I will!
The honour of the king is sacred to me,
Yet such a rule can win him naught but hatred
'Tis not the king's will, that I dare maintain,
Such ruthlessness my people merits not.
You overstrain your warrant.

GESSLER

Ha! You take

Too much upon you!

RUDENZ

I have held my peace
At all the grievous deeds that I beheld.
My seeing eye I wilfully have closed;
My overswelling and indignant heart
Have I repressed within my bosom, yet
Did I keep silence longer, it were treason
To Fatherland and Emperor alike.

BERTHA *casts herself between him and the
Landgrave*

O God! You add but fuel to his frenzy!

RUDENZ

My people I forsook; my kith and kin
Forsook, and all the ties of nature snapped
In twain, that I might join myself to you.
The truest weal of all I thought to further

MANY VOICES

The apple

Is hit!

[*Walter Fürst totters and threatens to fall. Bertha supports him.*]

GESSLER, *amazed*

What, hath he shot? The madman!

BERTHA

The boy lives! To thyself again, good father!

WALTER TELL *comes bounding with the apple*

Father, here is the apple! Well I knew
Thou wouldst not hurt thy boy.

[*TELL has stood meanwhile bending forward, as if he were following the flight of the arrow—the crossbow slips from his hand—as he sees the boy coming he hurries to meet him with out-stretched arms, and lifts him with tumultuous passion to his heart; in this attitude he swoons to the ground. All stand touched.*]

BERTHA

Thou gracious Heaven!

WALTER FÜRST, *to father and son*

Children, my children!

STAUFFACHER

God in Heaven be praised!

LEUTHOLD

That was a shot! Until the end of time
Will men relate the story of that shot!

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

Of Tell the Archer shall the tale be told
 So long as stand the hills on their foundations !
 [*Hands the apple to the Landgrave.*]

GESSLER

By God ! The apple cleft through the very core.
 It was a master-shot—I needs must praise it.

RÖSSELMANN

The shot was good, but woe unto the man
 That urged him to tempt God !

STAUFFACHER

Up, Tell, and be
 Yourself again ! You have right manfully
 Ransomed yourself, and free you may go home.

RÖSSELMANN

Come, come, and to the mother bring her son.
 [*They seek to lead him away.*]

GESSLER

Hark ye, Tell !

TELL, *coming back*

What is your good pleasure, sir ?

GESSLER

A second bolt didst stick into thy baldrick.
 Aye, aye, I saw thee. What didst mean there-
 by !

TELL, *embarrassed*

Sir, that is archers' custom.

GESSLER

Not so, Tell!
 Thou shalt not put me off with such an answer.
 I make no doubt thou hadst another drift.
 Out with the truth, Tell, frankly and cheerily.
 Be what it will, I guarantee thy life.
 Whereto the second bolt?

TELL

Well then, my lord,
 Seeing that you have guaranteed my life,
 The truth I'll tell to the last syllable.

*[He draws forth the bolt from his
 baldrick, and eyes the Landgrave
 with a terrible glance.]*

With this same second bolt I had shot you
 Had I hit my dear child, and mark my word,
 You of a verity I had not missed!

GESSLER

'Tis well, Tell! I have guaranteed thy life—
 I gave my knightly word; I'll not disown it.
 But for that I thy malice have explored
 I'll have thee led away and kept in ward,
 Where neither sun nor moon shall shine upon
 thee,

That I may be in surety from thy bolts.
 Seize on him, fellows, bind him!

[Tell is bound.]

STAUFFACHER

What, Sir, thus
 You use a man on whom the hand of God
 Itself hath manifested visibly?

GESSLER

We'll see a second time if it will save him!
 Bring him on board my galley. Incontinent
 I'll follow, and myself to Kiüssnacht bring him.

RÖSSELMANN

There you o'erstep your rights—you overstep.
 The Emperor's rights, you violate our charter.

GESSLER

Where are they? Hath the Emperor confirmed
 them?

That hath he not. By your obedience
 Ye first must win this grace. Ye all are rebels
 Against the Emperor's jurisdiction, all—
 And fosterers of insolent sedition!
 I know you all, I read you through and through.
 Him take I from amongst you for this present,
 But one and all are partners of his guilt.
 He that is wise, learn silence and submission.

[*He moves away. Bertha, Rudenz,
 Harras and men-at-arms follow.
 Friesshardt and Leuthold remain
 behind.*]

WALTER FÜRST, *convulsed with grief*
 Now all is over. He is well resolved
 To make an end of me and all my house.

STAUFFACHER to Tell

Oh, wherefore must you goad the bloody tyrant?

TELL

Let that man curb himself, that felt my pain!

STAUFFACHER

Now all is lost indeed! All, all is lost!
 With you we all lie fettered and in bonds.

PEASANTS, *surrounding Tell*

With you our last remaining solace goes.

LEUTHOLD, *drawing near*

It wrings my heart, Tell, yet I must obey.

TELL

Farewell!

WALTER TELL, *convulsed with grief, clinging to him*

O father, father, dear, dear father!

TELL, *raising his arms to Heaven*

Up yonder is thy Father, call on Him!

STAUFFACHER

Tell, shall I bear no message to thy wife?

TELL, *lifting the boy passionately to his breast*

The lad is free from hurt, me God will help!

[*Tears himself loose quickly and follows
the men-at-arms.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I

EASTERN SHORE OF THE LAKE OF THE FOUR
WOODSTEADS.

*To westward the prospect is closed by rugged cliffs
of fantastic form. The lake runs high;
violent roaring and tumult, with lightning
and thunderclaps between.*

KUNZ VON GERSAU, FISHER and FISHER-BOY

KUNZ

With mine own eyes I saw it, you may take
My word for't. All fell out as I have said.

FISHER

What, Tell, a captive! Borne away to Küss-
nacht!
The boldest man i' the land, the stoutest arm,
Came but the hour to strike a blow for freedom.

KUNZ

Himself the Landgrave brings him up the lake.
As I left Flüelen they were taking ship,
But this same storm that even as we speak
Is sweeping down upon us, and that drove
Me in all haste to seek a haven here,
Hath haply hindered their departure too.

FISHER

What! Tell in fetters, in the Landgrave's
power!
O, take my word, he'll bury him deep enough
That never more he'll see the light o' the day.
For truly he must fear the righteous vengeance
Of the free man he grievously provoked.

KUNZ

Our ancient Landreeve, too, the noble Thane
Of Attinghaus, lies at Death's door, they say.

FISHER

There parts the last sheet-anchor of our hopes!
For he alone it was that still his voice
Dared lift to champion the people's rights.

KUNZ

The storm doth wax in fury, fare you well!
I shall seek shelter i' the village here,
For of departure there can be to-day
No further thought. [Exit.

FISHER

A captive—Tell! and dead
 The Thane! Oh then! thy brazen countenance,
 Tyranny, rear aloft! Cast shame away!
 Mute is the mouth of truth, the seeing eye
 Is blinded, fettered is the arm itself
 That should have saved!

BOY

The hail is grievous, father,
 Pray come within! It is not seasonable
 To bide here in the open.

FISHER

Rave, ye winds!
 Ye lightnings, flame from Heaven! Burst, ye
 clouds!
 Open, ye flood-gates of the skies—pour down
 Your rushing streams, and whelm the world in
 water!
 Blast in the bud the unborn generations!
 Ye frenzied elements, usurp the sway!
 Ye bears, come forth, ye ancient wolves again,
 From the great wilderness! Yours is the land,
 For who will choose to dwell here rest of
 freedom?

BOY

Hark how the gulf doth roar, the whirlwind
 bellow!
 Ne'er in this gully hath the storm so raged.

FISHER

To draw his bow upon his own child's head!
 Ne'er on a father such a task was laid.

And shall not nature in fierce anger rise
 Indignant at the outrage? O, I would
 Not marvel if the cliffs should stoop their tops
 Into the lake, if yonder pinnacles,
 Yon towers of ice that since Creation's day
 Have never thawed, should melt down from
 their summits,
 The mountains topple, and the old ravines
 Crash in, a second deluge overwhelm
 The domiciles of every living thing.

[*A bell is heard.*]

BOY

Hark! They are ringing on the mountain
 yonder
 Across the lake. They must have seen some
 ship
 In sore distress, and so they pull the bell
 That folk may pray.

[*Climbs a height.*]

FISHER

Woe worth the craft that now
 At large, is cradled in this fearful cradle!
 Here doth the helm avail not, nor the helmsman.
 The storm is master, wind and wave play ball
 With man. No bay is near or far to grant
 Its friendly shelter. The sheer cliffs present
 No jutting to the clasp. Inhospitably
 They frown on him, and turn alone their flinty
 And rugged breast upon his wistful gaze.

BOY, *pointing to the left*

Father, a ship! It comes from Flüelen hither!

FISHER

God help the hapless folk. Hath once the
storm

Within this watery gulf entrapped itself,
It rages with a tiger's restlessness
That beats upon its cage's iron bars.

Howling it seeks the door, a bootless search,
For all around the steep cliffs pen it in,
That, heaven-high, wall up the narrow pass.

[Climbs upon the height.

BOY

It is the Landgrave's ship of Uri, father,
I know her by her flag and crimson awning.

FISHER

Justice of God! Aye, there in very truth
The Landgrave and none else doth voyage.
There

He sails and with him in the ship he bears
His guilt. The Avenger's arm hath found him
swiftly.

Now over him a stronger Lord he knows.
These billows reck not of his voice. These cliffs
Stoop not their heads before his hat. Boy, pray
not!

Hang not thyself upon the Judge's arm!

BOY

I pray not for the Landgrave. 'Tis for Tell
I pray, that with him in the boat is.

FISHER

Oh

Unreason of the unseeing element!

Must thou, to smite one guilty head, confound
In one same ruin, steersman, ship and all?

BOY

See! See! The Buggisgrat they've weathered
safely!

But now the vehemence of the storm, hurled
back

In fierce recoil from off the Devil's Minster,
Sweeps them again to the Great Axenberg.
They're lost to sight!

FISHER

There is the Chopping-knife
Where many a gallant bark hath gone to wrack.
Unless they steer past shrewdly, must the ship
Be shattered on the cliff, that plummet-sheer
Drops down into the deep. A master steersman
They have on board—could any save, 'twere
Tell,

But he is fettered hand and foot.

WILLIAM TELL, *with the crossbow*

[*He comes with quick steps, looks
around him in amaze, and
shows the most violent emotion.
When he is in the middle of the
stage, he casts himself down,
stretching out his hands first to
Earth and then to Heaven.*]

BOY, *seeing him*

Look, father,
Who is yon man that kneels there?

FISHER
 With his hands
 He grasps the earth, and seems beside himself.

BOY, coming forward
 What see I? Father, father, come and see!

FISHER, coming near
 Who is it? God in Heaven! Tell it is!
 How come you hither, speak!

BOY
 Were you not there,
 On board the ship, a captive and in fetters?

FISHER
 You were not borne away to Kiüssnacht, then?

TELL, rising
 Freed am I!

FISHER and BOY
 Freed! O miracle of God!

BOY
 Whence come you hither?

TELL
 From yon galley.

FISHER
 What!

BOY, at the same time
 Where is the Landgrave?

TELL

Drifting on the billows.

FISHER

Is't possible? But you, how come you here?
How have you scaped your fetters and the
storm?

TELL

By Heaven's gracious Providence. But hear!

FISHER *and* BOY

Say on, say on!

TELL

In Altorf what befell,
Know ye that?

FISHER

Everything I know, say on!

TELL

How that the Landgrave had me seized and
bound
And would have brought me to his keep at
Küssnacht?

FISHER

Himself for Flüelen taking ship with you.
All do we know, but tell us how you 'scaped.

TELL

I lay i' the ship, fast bound with cords, defence-
less.
And doomed beyond rerieve. No more I
hoped.

To look upon the cheerful light o' the sun,
 Or the dear face of wife and children. Lorn
 Of hope, I looked out on the waste of waters.

O hapless man!

TELL

Thus did we sail along,
 The Landgrave's self, Rudolph der Harras, I,
 The men-at-arms. My quiver lay i' the stern,
 The crossbow with it, close beside the rudder;
 And when we now were come unto the head-
 land

Hard by the Lesser Axen, God ordained
 That from the Gothard's gullies, unawares,
 There brake so fierce and murderous a storm
 That all the rowers' hearts did sink within them,
 And weened they all they should be surely
 drowned

In piteous wise. Then heard I how a hench-
 man

Turning unto the Landgrave, spake these words:
 —You see, Sir, your extremity, and ours,
 How all we hover on the brink of death.

The steersmen in this pass by utter fear
 Are stricken helpless, and have little skill
 Of seamanship. But look you, here is Tell,
 A stalwart man, that well can steer a ship,
 How if we used him in our bitter need?

Then spake to me the Landgrave:—Tell, so thou
 Might'st take on thee to help us from this storm,
 Haply I might enlarge thee of thy bonds.

But I made answer—Aye, sir, with God's help
 I'll take it on me, and I'll help us hence.

Thus was I loosed from forth my bonds, and
 stood
 Beside the helm, and steered with all my skill,
 Yet sidelong glanced where lay my shooting-
 gear,
 And keenly scanned the shore, if haply might
 Some vantage offer there to my escape.
 And as I marked where flattened at the top
 A rocky reef did jut into the lake—

FISHER

Aye, aye, 'tis at the foot of the Great Axen,
 Yet do I hold it not for possible—
 So sheer it rises—leaping from the ship
 To reach it.

TELL

To the oarsmen then I shouted
 To lay to with a will, until we reached
 The rocky shelf, for there, I cried, the worst
 Is over. Then besought I God for grace,
 And straining every sinew, thrust the stern
 Against the rocky wall; then, snatching up
 My shooting-gear, I swung myself aloft
 With a great leap upon the rocky ledge,
 And with a mighty foot-thrust backward from
 me
 The craft I hurled into the gulf of waters;
 There let it drift as God will on the billows.
 So am I here, delivered from the storm's
 Despite, and man's worse violence.

FISHER

Tell, Tell!

A miracle the Lord on you hath wrought
 That all may see! I scarce believe my senses.

But say, where think you now to turn your
 steps,
 For safety is not for you, if so be
 The Landgrave scapes the tempest with his life.

TELL

I heard him say, whilst still on board the ship
 I lay in bonds, his purpose was to land
 At Brunnen, and to take me to his Keep
 By Schwyz.

FISHER

Means he by land to journey thither?

TELL

He doth.

FISHER

Oh, then, without delay, seek hiding!
 God will not help you twice from out his hand.

TELL

Tell me the nearest way to Arth and Küssnacht.

FISHER

The open highway thither runs past Steinen,
 But by a shorter and more secret path
 My lad can guide you, if you will, by Lowerz.

TELL, *giving him his hand*

May God requite your kindly deed! Farewell!

[*Goes and returns.*]

Did not you also take the oath at Rütli?
 Meseems they named you to me.

FISHER

I was there,
 And took the oath unto the covenant.

TELL

Then haste to Bürglen—this for love of me;
My wife despairs of me, bear her the news
That I am free again, and in good hiding.

FISHER

But whither shall I tell her you are fled?

TELL

You'll find her father with her, others too
That took the oath in Rütli with the rest.
Bid them be valorous and of good cheer.
Say Tell is free and master of his arm,
And shortly they shall hear of me again.

FISHER

What is thy purpose? Freely show it me.

TELL

Is it once done, why 'twill be talked of too.

[*Exit.*]

FISHER

Show him the way, Jenni. God prosper thee!
What thou hast planned, that wilt thou carry
through. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II

HALL OF THE THANE OF ATTINGHAUSEN

THE THANE, *in an arm-chair, dying.* WALTER FÜRST, STAUFFACHER, MELCHTHAL, and BAUMGARTEN *busied about him.* WALTER TELL *kneeling before the dying man.*

WALTER FÜRST

'Tis over with him. He hath passed away.

STAUFFACHER

He lies not like one dead. See, on his lips
The feather stirs, and peaceful is his sleep.
Upon his features plays a tranquil smile.

[*Baumgarten goes to the door and speaks
with some one.*]

WALTER FÜRST, *to Baumgarten*

Who is it, pray?

BAUMGARTEN, *coming back*

Dame Hedwig 'tis, your daughter.
She seeks to speak with you, to see the boy.

[*Walter Tell rises to his feet.*]

WALTER FÜRST

Why, can I comfort her? Have I myself
Comfort? Doth sorrow heap all on my head?

HEDWIG, *bursting in*

Where is my child? Stay me not! I will see
him!

STAUFFACHER

Calm yourself! Think that in the house of
death—

HEDWIG, *rushing to the boy*

My Watty, have I thee alive?

WALTER TELL, *hanging upon her*

Poor mother!

HEDWIG

But is it true? Have I thee quite unhurt?

[*She looks at him with anxious solicitude.*]

And is it possible? Could he make thee

A target for his shaft? How could he? Oh,
 He hath no heart, upon his very child
 He could let loose his bolt!

WALTER FÜRST

In fear and trembling
 He did it, with a pain-wrung soul. He did it
 Constrained, for life stood on the issue.

HEDWIG

Oh!
 Had he a father's heart, he would have died
 A thousand deaths or ever he had done it.

STAUFFACHER

God's gracious dispensation you should praise
 That guided hath so well—

HEDWIG

Can I forget
 What might have happened? God in Heaven,
 though
 I live to four-score, shall I ever see
 The boy stand bound, the father aim at him,
 And ever will the arrow cleave my heart!

MELCHTHAL

Knew you but how the Landgrave goaded him.

HEDWIG

O untamed heart of men! If but their pride
 Be wounded, then of nothing more they reck.
 In the blind frenzy of the game they stake
 Alike both head of child and heart of mother.

BAUMGARTEN

Is not your husband's fortune hard enough
That you must wrong him too with bitter
blame?

Have you no pity for his sufferings?

HEDWIG, turning upon him fiercely

Naught for thy friend's calamity hast thou
But tears? Where were ye when they cast in
bonds

That man of men? Where was your help in
need?

Ye watched, ye let the horrid deed be done.

Ye did not raise a finger, when your friend
Was led forth from amongst you. Say, hath
Tell

So dealt with you? Did he stand pitying by
When close upon thy heels the Landgrave's
troopers

Pursued, when at thy feet the maddened lake
Did surge and thunder? Not with idle tears
He pitied thee; i' the boat he sprang, his wife,
His children he forgot, and set thee free.

WALTER FÜRST

What could we venture for his rescue, we
A little handful only, and unarmed?

HEDWIG, throwing herself upon his breast

O father, and thou too hast lost him, thou,
The country, all of us have lost him. He
To all is wanting; ah, and we to him!
God shield his soul from uttermost despair.
To him, deep down into his dreary dungeon

Can pierce no consolation of a friend.
 If he should sicken! Woe is me, confined
 Within the humid darkness of a prison
 Sicken he must! for as the Alpine rose
 I' the air o' the marsh doth pale and hang its head,
 E'en so for him there is no life but in
 The light o' the sun, the balsam-stream o' the
 breeze.

A captive! he! the breath he breathes is free-
 dom!

He cannot live i' the charnel-air of vaults.

STAUFFACHER

Be pacified! We all of us will labour
 To fling his prison-gates ajar.

HEDWIG

What can ye do, ye without him? So long
 As Tell was free, aye, then there still was hope,
 Then innocency had a champion still,
 The persecuted still a helper had.
 All of ye Tell delivered; all of ye
 Together could not loose his fetters.

[*The Thane wakes.*

BAUMGARTEN

Hush!

He stirs!

ATTINGHAUSEN, *raising himself*

Where is he?

STAUFFACHER

Who?

ATTINGHAUSEN

He fails me then!
In my last hour he leaves me desolate!

STAUFFACHER

He means his nephew. Have they sent for
him?

WALTER FURST

Aye, they have summoned him. Take comfort!
He
Hath found his heart at last, and he is ours.

ATTINGHAUSEN

His voice hath he uplifted for his country?

STAUFFACHER

With a hero's boldness.

ATTINGHAUSEN

Wherefore comes he not
For my last benediction? Well I feel
That I am swiftly drawing to an end.

STAUFFACHER

Nay, noble Sir, not so. Your brief repose
Hath brought refreshment, and your glance is
bright.

ATTINGHAUSEN

Nay, pain is life, and pain hath left me too.
There is an end of suffering as of hope.

[*He perceives the boy.*
Who is the boy?

WALTER FÜRST

Give him your blessing, Sir.
 He is my grandson, and is fatherless.
 [*Hedwig kneels with the boy before the
 dying man.*]

ATTINGHAUSEN

And fatherless I leave you all behind,
 Aye, all! Woe's me, that my last glance hath
 seen
 The downfall of my land! Was it for this
 My life hath stretched unto the longest span,
 That in the end I should die utterly,
 With all my hopes?

STAUFFACHER, *to Walter Fürst*

And shall he pass away
 Shrouded in sombre grief? Shall we not gild
 His latest hour with the bright ray of hope?
 O noble Thane, lift up your heart, not wholly
 Forsaken are we, not past rescue lost.

ATTINGHAUSEN

And who shall rescue you?

WALTER FÜRST

Ourselves! But hear!
 Their promise each to other the three lands
 Have pledged, that they will drive the tyrants
 forth.
 Concluded is the league, a sacred oath
 Binds us together. Ere another year
 Begins its round, we are resolved to act.
 In a free country will your dust repose.

ATTINGHAUSEN

O tell me more! Concluded is the league?

MELCHTHAL

On one same day will the three Woodsteads rise.
All is prepared, the secret until now
Well-kept, though many hundreds share it.
Hollow

The very ground is 'neath the tyrants, numbered
The days of their dominion; soon there shall
Not so much as a trace of them be found.

ATTINGHAUSEN

But think ye of their strongholds in the land?

MELCHTHAL

On one same day they all are doomed to fall!

ATTINGHAUSEN

And are the nobles privy to this league?

STAUFFACHER

Their help we look for when it comes to deeds;
Yet hath the yeoman only sworn the oath.

ATTINGHAUSEN, *rearing himself slowly in
great amaze*

What, hath the yeoman from his own resources,
Unaided of the nobles, dared such deed?

In his own strength hath he such confidence?

Nay, then, there is no longer need of us.

Blithely we may go down into the grave.

All dies not with us! Nay, through other
strengths

His glorious heritage shall man retain.

[*He lays his hand upon the head of the
child, who is kneeling before him.*]

Forth from this head, whereon the apple lay,
 A new, a better liberty shall spring.
 The ancient order topples, changes the time,
 And from the wreck, new life is blossoming.

STAUFFACHER, to *Walter Fürst*

See, what a radiance round his eye is shed!
 That is not Nature's lamp that flares and dies.
 It is the morning beam of a new life.

ATTINGHAUSEN

From his old castle comes the noble down,
 And to the cities swears his civic oath.
 E'en now in Uechtland is't begun, in Thurgau.
 Her queenly head the noble Berne uplifts,
 And Freiburg is a Stronghold of the Free.
 The bustling Zürich arms her craftsman-guilds
 Unto a warlike host. The might of kings
 Shatters itself on her eternal walls.

*[He speaks the following with the tone
 of a prophet—his speech rises to
 inspiration.]*

I see the princes and the noble lords
 March forth to battle, panoplied in steel,
 To war upon a harmless folk of shepherds.
 The fight is to the death, and many a pass
 Grows glorious through a bloody settlement.
 The yeoman hurls him with his naked breast,
 A free-will offering, on the bristling spears.
 He breaks their rank—the flower of knighthood
 falls,
 And Freedom triumphing unfurls aloft
 Her glorious banner.

*[Seizing the hands of Walter Fürst and
 Stauffacher.]*

Wherefore link yourselves
 Firmly together, firmly and for ever.
 No home of freedom be to other strange.
 Upon your mountains set your beacons out
 That league to league may quickly rally. Be
 United, be united, be united.

[He falls back upon his cushion; his hands, though lifeless, still hold the hands of the others in their clasp. Fürst and Stauffacher look upon him for a while in silence; then they move away, each given over to his grief. In the meanwhile the retainers have thronged in in silence, they draw near with signs of hushed or of violent grief, some kneel down beside him and weep upon his hand; during this mute scene, the castle bell is tolled.]

[Enter Rudenz hastily.]

RUDENZ

Liveth he yet? Oh, can he hear me still?

WALTER FÜRST, *pointing with averted face*

You are our liege-lord now and our protector.
 This castle hath another name.

RUDENZ, *perceives the dead body, and stands shaken with grief*

Thou God
 Of Pity, cometh my remorse too late?
 Could he not live a few poor pulse-beats yet
 To look upon mine altered heart?
 Whilst he yet walked i' the light, I did despise

His trusty voice, and now he is gone from us,
 Gone hence for ever and hath left with me
 My grievous guilt, a debt unpaid. O say
 Did he depart in anger with me?

STAUFFACHER

Nay!

He heard e'en as he died, what you have done,
 And blessed the daring boldness of your speech.

RUDENZ, *kneeling beside the dead man*

Aye, sacred relics of a man beloved;
 Thou lifeless corse! Here do I plight my vow,
 Here in thy claycold hand. Each alien tie
 For ever have I rent in twain. Myself
 Unto my people have I given again.
 A Switzer I, a Switzer will I be
 With all my soul.

[*Standing up.*

Mourn for the friend, the father
 Of all of ye, but be ye not dismayed,
 For not alone his heritage on me
 Descends, his heart, his spirit fall upon me.
 The debt that his grey age leaves owing you,
 My lusty youth shall yet discharge in full.
 Your hand, O reverend father, give to me,
 And give me yours, and Melchthal, give yours
 too.

Nay, think not twice, turn yourself not away,
 Receive my oath, my solemn plighted vow.

WALTER FÜRST

Give him your hand! His heart hath turned
 again,
 And claims our trust.

MELCHTHAL

You held the peasant lightly.
Tell us, what must we look for at your hands?

RUDENZ

O! think not of my youth's rash errors.

STAUFFACHER

Be

United! was the father's latest word.
Be mindful of it.

MELCHTHAL

Why then, here's my hand!
The peasant's handgrip, noble Sir, it is
A man's word too. What is the Knight without
us?
And older our condition is than yours.

RUDENZ

I honour it, and with my sword will shield it.

MELCHTHAL

The selfsame arm, Sir Thane, that doth subdue
The stubborn earth, and makes her bosom fruit-
ful,
Can shield the man's breast too.

RUDENZ

Aye, ye shall shield
My breast, and your breast I will shield, and so
Either through other will be strong. But why
Waste time in words, when still the Fatherland

A prey to foreign tyranny doth lie?
 When once our soil is purgèd from the foe
 There will be time enough to square our claims
 In peace.

[*After a moment's silence.*

What! Ye are silent? Have ye naught
 To say to me? Deserve I not your trust?
 Then must I force myself against your will
 Into the secret of your covenant.

A folkmoot have you held, have taken oath
 Upon the Rütli. That I know, know all
 That came to parley there. What ye yourselves
 Gave not into my trust, that have I kept
 As 'twere a holy pledge. I never was
 My country's foe, believe me, nor had ever
 Made cause against you. Yet ye did amiss
 In that ye did delay. The hour is urgent
 And calls for sudden deed. Already Tell
 Hath fallen a victim to your tardiness.

STAUFFACHER

We swore to wait till Christmas.

RUDENZ

Not so I.
 I was not there. Wait ye, but I shall act.

MELCHTHAL

What, would you—

RUDENZ

Of the country's fathers now
 I count me one, and your protection is
 My first of duties.

WALTER FÜRST

To the earth to give
This precious dust, is your first duty and
Your holiest.

RUDENZ

Have we once freed the land
We'll lay the new-plucked wreath of victory
Upon his bier. Oh, not your cause alone
My friends, but with the tyrants mine own cause
I must fight out. Hear me and know. My
Bertha

Has vanished, torn with overbearing outrage
Secretly from our midst.

STAUFFACHER

What! hath the tyrant
Shrunk not from such a deed of violence
Against the noble, freeborn maid?

RUDENZ

O friends,
To you I promised help, but help from you
Myself must first implore. She whom I love
Is ravished from me. Where the madman hides
her
Who knows, or what outrageous violence
They will adventure, to constrain her heart
To an abhorrèd bond? Forsake me not!
O help me to deliver her! She loves you,
And well she hath deservèd from the land
That every arm should arm in her defence.

WALTER FÜRST

What do you think to venture?

RUDENZ

Do I know?

Ah! in this night that doth enshroud her fate,
 In the appalling anguish of this doubt,
 Where naught substantial offers to my grasp,
 One thing alone stands clear within my soul—
 From 'neath the ruins of the tyrant power
 To dig her forth, that is the only hope.
 The strongholds we must level with the ground
 If haply we may find where she lies bound.

MELCHTHAL

Come, lead us on and we will follow. Where-
 fore

Hoard for to-morrow what to-day can do?
 When we took oath at Rütli, Tell was free.
 The monstrous deed not yet was brought to
 pass.

Another time hath brought another law.
 Who is so base that he could falter now?

RUDENZ, *to Stauffacher and Walter Fürst*

Meanwhile to arms and gird ye for the work!
 Wait till the mountain-beacons flash on high,
 For swifter than the courier-sail doth glide,
 The tidings of our victory shall fly;
 And when ye see the welcome flames shine out,
 Then like a thunderbolt upon the foe,
 And lay the fabric of the tyrants low!

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE III

THE HOLLOW WAY NEAR KÜSSNACHT

The road leads downwards at the back of the scene between cliffs, and wayfarers are seen upon the height before they appear upon the stage. The whole scene is shut in by cliffs; on one of the foremost is a jutting point, overgrown with brushwood.

[Enter TELL with the crossbow.

TELL

Here through this hollow roadway must he come;

There leads no other way to Küssnacht. Here I'll make an end. The chance is favourable.

Yon elderbush will screen me from his gaze. From yonder vantage-ground my shaft can reach him.

The straitness of the road forbids pursuit. Now make thy reckoning with Heaven, Landgrave,

Hence must thou and away, thy sands are run!

Quiet I lived and harmless, drew my bow
Only upon the creatures of the wood.

No stain of murder sullied my pure thoughts. But thou hast frightened me from out my peace.

To rankling dragon-venom hast thou turned
The milk of human-kindness in my bosom.

The monstrous hast thou made familiar to me. He that his child's head for his target takes
Can hit his mark too in his foeman's heart.

The little child, helpless and innocent,
The faithful wife, these from thy frenzy, Landgrave,

'Tis mine to shelter. Then, what time I drew
The bowstring, when my hand was palsy-
stricken,

When thou with ruthless, devilish delight
At my child's head didst force me to take aim,
When I with impotent entreaty strove
Before thy face, then in my heart I vowed
With a dread oath that God alone did hear,
That the first mark of my next shot should be
Thine heart. That vow, 'midst hellish torments
made,

It is a sacred debt. It shall be paid.

Thou art my lord, mine Emperor's delegate,
Yet not the Emperor had permitted him
Such deeds as thou. Into this land he sent thee
To deal out justice—stern, for he is wroth,
But not in insolent impunity
Bloodthirstily from crime to crime to range.
There lives a God, to punish and avenge.

Now come thou forth, bringer of bitter smarts,
My dearest jewel now, my chiefest treasure.
I'll set thee such a mark as hitherto
Impenetrable was to pious prayer,
Yet of a truth, thee it shall not withstand!
And thou, my well-tried bowstring, that so oft
Hast stood me in good stead in joyous sports,
Betray me not in grim and dreadful earnest!
But now be staunch, but now, thou trusty string,
That hast so oft bewinged the bitter shaft!
Now should it scape my hands all impotent,
I have no second—all my shafts are spent.

[*Wayfarers pass over the scene*

Upon this bench of stone I'll sit me down,

That lends the wayfarer a brief repose ;
 For here no home is, here with hasty step
 And cold strange glance, each hurries other by,
 Nor hath a question for his pain. There fares
 The careful-minded merchant, and the pilgrim
 Trussed lightly for the march, the pious monk,
 The sullen robber and the merry minstrel,
 The sumpter-driver with his burdened horse
 That cometh from the lands of men afar,
 For every highroad leads to the end o' the earth.
 They tarry not, but swiftly hurry further,
 Upon his errand each—and mine is murder.

[*Sits down.*]

Else, when the father went abroad, dear children,
 What joy there was when he came home again !
 For never did he greet ye empty-handed.
 Ever he brought some beauteous Alpine-blossom,
 Or some rare bird, or a quaint Ammon's horn,
 Such as the traveller picks up on the mountain.
 Now on another chase he goes, he sits
 By the wild way, with murder in his heart.
 Now for the foeman's life he lays a snare,
 And yet on you alone he thinks, dear children,
 Now too,—to shield your winsome innocence
 From the swift vengeance of the tyrant foe,
 Now unto murder will he bend the bow.

[*Stands up.*]

A noble quarry 'tis I lie in wait for.
 The hunter wearies not the livelong day
 To range abroad in winter's fiercest mood,
 To dare the break-neck leap from crag to crag,
 To clamber up the steep and slippery walls
 Whereon he glues himself with his own blood,
 And all to hunt some paltry chamois down.

Here doth a rarer prize stand on the issue,
The heart of my fell foe that would undo me.

[*From afar is heard a strain of merry
music, drawing nearer.*

My whole life long the crossbow have I handled,
Have practised by the rules o' the archer's
craft.

Oft have I hit the clout full i' the centre,
And many a goodly prize have carried home
From archers' contests, but to-day I'll shoot
My master-shot, and win the champion's fame
In all the circle of the mountain-land.

[*A bridal-train passes over the scene,
and up through the hollow way.*
TELL contemplates it, leaning upon
his bow; STÜSSI THE RANGER
joins him.

STÜSSI

That is the cloister-bailiff of Mörlischachen,
That here his bridal holds—a wealthy man.
He hath at least ten dairies in the Alps.
He comes to fetch his bride from Imisee.
This night will be high revelry in Küssnacht.
Come with me, every honest man is bidden.

TELL

A serious guest seems not the bridal-house.

STÜSSI

Doth grief oppress you, cast it from your heart.
Cheerfully take what comes. The times are
grievous,
And one had need snap up each flitting joy.
Here is a bridal, there a burial.

TELL

And oft treads one hard on the other's heels.

STÜSSI

Aye, aye, so runs the world, and everywhere
There is no dearth of evil chance. In Glarus
A landslip hath slid down, and one whole side
O' the Glärnisch is sunk in.

TELL

The very mountains
Do they too totter? Naught on earth stands
fast.

STÜSSI

And elsewhere wondrous portents are announced.
From one that comes from Baden I had this.
—A knight was riding to the king; he met
A swarm of hornets on his way, they fell
Upon his horse, that from sheer torture sank
Dead to the ground. He reached the king on
foot.

TELL

Even unto the weak his sting is given.

[*ARMGARD comes with several children,
and takes her stand at the entrance
to the hollow way.*]

STÜSSI

They say it bodes disaster to the State,
And grievous deeds against the course of kind.

TELL

Why, not a day but doth bring forth the like.
There needs no prodigy to herald them,

STÜSSI

Aye, happy he that tills his field in peace,
And bides at home unvexed among his folk.

TELL

The meekest man cannot abide in peace
Unless it be his evil neighbour's will.

[Tell looks often with restless expectation towards the higher part of the road.]

STÜSSI

Farewell! You are awaiting some one here?

TELL

I am.

STÜSSI

God give you a joyous home-coming!
You are from Uri? Thence this very day
Our gracious lord the Landgrave is expected.

[Enter a WAYFARER.]

WAYFARER

Expect the Landgrave not to-day. The waters
Are out, by reason of the heavy rains.
The floods have carried every bridge away.

[Tell stands up.]

ARMGARD, *coming forward*

The Landgrave comes not!

STÜSSI

Seek ye aught from him?

ARMGARD

Aye, marry!

STÜSSI

Wherefore do you post yourself
Here in this hollow roadway in his path?

ARMGARD

He cannot step aside, here he must listen.

FRIESSHARDT, *coming hastily down the hollow
way, and calling on the stage—*

Look that ye clear the way! My gracious lord
The Landgrave comes. He rides upon my heels.

[*Exit Tell.*

ARMGARD, *excitedly*

The Landgrave comes!

[*She goes with her children to the front of
the scene.* GESSLER and RUDOLPH

DER HARRAS *appear on horseback
on the higher part of the road.*

STÜSSI, *to Friesshardt*

How came ye through the waters,
Seeing the flood hath swept away the bridges?

FRIESSHARDT

We have done battle with the lake, good fellow.
We finch not from a little Alpine water.

STÜSSI

You were on shipboard in the raging storm?

FRIESSHARDT

Ay, that we were. I'll think on't all my days.

STÜSSI

Oh, stay and tell us—

FRIESSHARDT

Loose me, I must on,
The Landgrave in his castle to announce.

[*Exit.*]

STÜSSI

Now, had there been good folk aboard the ship,
To the bottom had it gone with man and mouse.
That pack nor fire nor water can come at!

[*He looks about him.*]

Why, what hath come o' the huntsman that I
talked with?

[*Exit.*]

[GESSLER and RUDOLPH DER HARRAS
on horseback.]

GESSLER

Say what you will, I am the Emperor's servant,
And I must look how I may do his pleasure.
He sent me not into the land to flatter
And fawn upon the folk. Obedience
He looks for. Shall the boor be lord i' the land,
Or shall the Emperor? That's the point at issue.

ARMGARD

Now is the moment, now I'll make my plea!

[*She approaches timorously.*]

GESSLER

I did not set the hat up for a jest
At Altorf, nor to try the people's hearts.
Them I knew long ago. I set it up
That they might learn to bend their stubborn
necks
That they do bear so high. The unpalatable
Full in their way I set, where they must pass it,

Where it must thrust itself upon their eyes
And mind them of their lord, whom they forget.

RUDOLPH

Yet are there certain rights the people hath—

GESSLER

Now is no time to weigh them overnicely.
Wide matters are afoot. The Imperial House
Hath set itself to grow. What gloriously
The sire began, the son will consummate.
This little nation is a stumbling-block—
By fair means or by foul, submit it must.

*[They are passing over. The woman
casts herself down before the
Landgrave.]*

ARMGARD

Mercy, Sir Landgrave! Mercy! Pardon!
Pardon!

GESSLER

Why do ye thrust yourself upon my path
I' the open highroad? Back!

ARMGARD

My husband lies
In prison. His poor orphans cry for bread.
Dread Lord, have pity on our great distress!

RUDOLPH

Who are you? Who is your husband?

ARMGARD

Good my lord,
A poor wildgrass-cutter o' the Rigiberg,

That swinging o'er the precipice, doth mow
 'The common grass from off the face o' the cliff
 Whither the cattle venture not to climb—

RUDOLPH, *to the Landgrave*

By Heaven, a sorry and a wretched life!
 I do entreat you, set the poor man free;
 For howsoever grievous be his fault
 His dreadful trade is punishment enough.

[*To the Woman.*]

You shall have justice—your petition make
 Within the castle. Here is not the place.

ARMGARD

Nay, nay, I will not budge from off this spot
 Until the Landgrave give me back my husband.
 Six long months hath he lain within his cell
 And yet the judge hath not pronounced his
 doom.

GESSLER

Out, woman! Will you put constraint upon
 me?

Out, I say!

ARMGARD

Justice, Landgrave! Thou i' the land
 Art judge i' the Emperor's room and God's.
 Then do

Thy duty. As thou hopest justice once
 From Heaven, show us justice!

GESSLER

Out o' the way!
 Trounce me the saucy rabble hence!

ARMGARD, *laying hold of the horse's bridle*

Nay, nay!
Naught more have I to lose! Thou shalt not
hence

Till thou have done me justice, Landgrave!
Knit

Thy brow, roll as thou wilt thine eyeballs, we
So past all bounds of wretchedness are wretched
We care no more if thou be wroth or not!

GESSLER

Room, woman, or with mine horse I'll ride thee
down!

ARMGARD

Nay, ride me down, then! Look you, here I
lie,

*[She drags her children to the ground,
and throws herself with them in
his way.]*

I and my children. Let thine horse's hoofs
Trample them in the dust, poor orphans! 'Tis
not

The worst thing thou hast done!

RUDOLPH

Art frantic, woman?

ARMGARD, *continuing more passionately*

Hast thou not long since trampled under foot
The Emperor's land? Oh, I am but a woman!
Were I a man, I'd find a better way
Than here i' the dust to lie!

*[The music is heard as before on the
high part of the way, but muffled.]*

GESSLER

Where are my men?
Tear her away, ere I forget myself
And do a thing I shall be sorry for.

RUDOLPH

Your men-at-arms cannot get through, my lord,
The hollow-road is blocked up by a wedding.

GESSLER

An all too gentle ruler am I still
Towards this people. Still their tongues are
free.

They are not wholly tamed yet, as they must be.
But there shall be a change, I swear there shall!
I'll break this stubborn mind, this saucy spirit
Of liberty I'll bend, I will proclaim
A new law to these lands, I'll—

[*An arrow pierces him; he puts his
hand to his heart, and sways as if he
would fall. With a stifled voice—*

God have mercy!

RUDOLPH

Sir Landgrave! God! What is that? Whence
came that?

ARMGARD, *starting up*

Murder! murder! He staggers, falls, he's hit!
Full in the heart the shaft hath smitten him!

RUDOLPH, *leaping from his horse*

What horrible mischance! O God, Sir Knight—
On Heaven for mercy call, you're a dead man!

GESSLER

That is Tell's shot!

[He has slid down from his horse into the arms of Rudolph Harras, and is laid upon the bench.]

TELL, *appearing above on the top of the cliff*

The archer dost thou know!
No other seek! Free are the huts, from thee
Is innocence secure. Thou'lt harm the land
No more!

[He disappears from the height, the people rush in.]

STÜSSI, *in front*

What's here? What hath befallen?

ARMGARD

The Landgrave
Is shot through with an arrow!

PEOPLE, *as they rush in*

Who is shot?

[Whilst the foremost of the bridal-train come upon the scene, the hindmost are still upon the height, and the music continues.]

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

He bleeds to death! Away, seek help, pursue
The murderer! O luckless man, thine end
Was fated thus, yet wouldst not heed my warn-
ing!

STÜSSI

By God, there lies he, pale and lifeless !

SEVERAL VOICES

Who

Hath done the deed ?

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

Are these folk mad, that they
Make music unto murder ? Bid them hush !

*[The music is suddenly silent, more
people throng in.]*

Sir Landgrave, speak, if speak you can. Have
you

No charge to give me ?

*[Gessler makes a sign with his hand,
which he repeats petulantly, when
it is not at once understood.]*

Whither shall I go ?

To Küssnacht ? Nay, I understand you not.

O chafe not thus, but turn from earthly thoughts
And think how you may make your peace with
Heaven.

*[The whole wedding-party stand about
the dying man with unfeeling
horror.]*

STÜSSI

See how he pales. Now Death knocks at his
heart.

His eyes are glazed already.

ARMGARD, *raising a child*

Children, look !

See how a tyrant dies !

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

Ye frantic women,
Have ye no feeling, that ye feast your eyes
Upon this horror? Help here, lend a hand!
Will no one help me from his breast to draw
The biting arrow?

WOMEN, *starting back*

We, lay hand on him
Whom God hath smitten!

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

Curses light upon you
And black damnation!

[*Draws his sword.*

STÜSSI, *staying his arm*

Do, an if you dare!
Your sway is at an end. Now fallen is
The tyrant of the country. We will brook
No violence more, we are free men.

ALL, *tumultuously*

The land
Is free!

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS

What, is it come to that? Hath fear
So swift an end, and meek obedience?

[*To the men-at-arms who are throng-
ing in.*

Ye see what horrible and murderous deed
 Hath here been done. 'Tis vain to think of
 help,
 And idle to pursue the murderer.
 Far different cares oppress us. Up, to Küss-
 nacht,
 That we may save his stronghold for the
 Emperor.
 For in this moment loosed are all the bonds
 Of order and of duty. We can build
 No longer on the faith of any man.

*[Whilst he is going off with the men-
 at-arms six Brethren of Mercy
 appear.]*

ARMGARD

Room, room! Here come the Brethren of
 Mercy!

STÜSSI

The victim lies.—Upon it swoop the ravens.

BRETHREN OF MERCY, *form a half-circle about
 the dead man, and chant in a deep tone*

Death comes on man with sudden tread;
 To him is granted no delay;
 He falls ere half his course be sped;
 At noontide is he snatched away.
 Ready or not, in hope or fear,
 Before his Judge he must appear.

*[Whilst the last lines are being repeated,
 the curtain falls.]*

ACT V

SCENE I

PUBLIC PLACE AT ALTORF

In the background on the right, the stronghold of Keep Uri, with the scaffolding still standing, as in Act I., Scene III. To the left a prospect of many mountains upon all of which beacon-fires are burning. It is just dawn. Bells are heard pealing afar in different directions.

[RUODI, KUONI, WERNI, THE MASTER STONEMASON, and many other COUNTRYMEN, also WOMEN and CHILDREN.

RUODI

See ye the beacon-fires upon the mountains?

STONEMASON

Hear ye the tocsin yonder, o'er the wood?

RUODI

The foe is driven forth!

STONEMASON

The strongholds won!

RUODI

And we i' the land of Uri, we still brook
Upon our soil the tyrant-donjon! What,
Are we the last that shall proclaim us free?

STONEMASON

Shall the yoke stand, that should have galled
our necks?

Up! Tear it to the ground!

ALL

Down with it, down!

RUODI

Where is the Bull of Uri?

BULL OF URI

Here! Your will?

RUODI

Climb to the watch-height, blow upon your horn
That far and wide it ring into the mountains
With crashing tones, and rousing every echo
Within the rocky gorges, swiftly call
The mountaineers together.

[*Exit Bull of Uri. Enter WALTER FÜRST.*]

WALTER FÜRST

Hold, friends, hold!

We still lack tidings what hath been achieved
In Schwyz and Unterwalden. Let us first
Await their couriers.

RUODI

What need to wait?

Dead is the tyrant! Freedom's day hath
dawned!

STONEMASON

Do not these flaming messengers suffice
That round about us flash from every mountain?

RUODI

Come all, set hand to, men and women both,
Shatter the scaffolding, burst in the arches,
Break down the masonry, let not one stone
Remain upon another.

STONEMASON

Comrades, on!
We builded it, we know how to destroy.

ALL

On, tear it to the ground!
[*They rush upon the building from all sides.*]

WALTER FÜRST

It is afoot!
I can no longer stay them!

[*Enter MELCHTHAL and BAUMGARTEN.*]

MELCHTHAL

What, still stands
The stronghold, when in ashes Sarnen lies
And Rossberg is a stoneheap?

WALTER FÜRST

Is that you,
Melchthal, and do you bring us liberty?
O say, are all three lands purged of the foe?

MELCHTHAL, *embracing him*
Purged is the soil! Be joyful, aged sire,
For at this hour wherein we speak, there is
No tyrant longer in the Switzers' land.

WALTER FÜRST

O speak! How were ye masters of the strong-
holds?

MELCHTHAL

Rudenz it was that with a venturous deed
 Of manly boldness, Castle Sarnen won,
 And Rossberg I the night before had scaled.
 But hear how it fell out. When we the Castle,
 Now voided of the foe, had set ablaze
 Right joyfully, and now the crackling flames
 Leapt up to kiss the sky, then rushes forth
 One Diethelm, one of Gessler's knaves, and
 cries:—

The Lady of Bruneck perishes in the flames!

WALTER FÜRST

Just God!

*[The beams of the scaffolding are heard
 crashing down.]*

MELCHTHAL

Herself it was that secretly
 Had been shut up there at the Landgrave's
 bidding.
 Then up leapt Rudenz, frenzied, for already
 We heard the beams crash down, the firm-set
 posts,
 And from the smoke rang out the piteous wail
 Of the unhappy damsel.

WALTER FÜRST

She is saved?

MELCHTHAL

Swift action then was needed, prompt resolve.
 Had he been nothing but our nobleman,
 Our life more dearly had we tendered, but
 He was the comrade of our oath, and Bertha

Honoured the people—so we staked our lives
Right fain, and plunged into the burning pile—

WALTER FÜRST

And she is saved?

MELCHTHAL

She is. Rudenz and I
Each helping other, bore her from the flames.
Behind our backs the rafters crashing fell.
And when, assured of her deliverance,
She turned her grateful glance to Heaven's light,
Then threw himself the Thane upon my heart,
Then was a league in silence sworn, that steeled
To truest temper in the glow of fire,
Will stand intact through all the shocks of fate.

WALTER FÜRST

And where is Landenberg?

MELCHTHAL

Fled o'er the Brünicg.
Not me had he to thank that he escaped
With eyes undarkened, he that brought deep
night
Over my father's eyes. I gave him chase,
O'ertook him in his flight, and tore him down
Before my father's feet. Already hung
My sword above him. Pleading piteously
He from the mercy of the blind old man
Received his life a gift. He swore an oath
To sink the feud and never to return,
And he will keep it. He has felt our arm!

WALTER FÜRST

O well for you that you have not with blood
Defiled your stainless triumph!

CHILDREN

[Hurrying over the stage with fragments of the scaffolding.]

Freedom! Freedom!

[The horn of Uri is blown with a mighty blast.]

WALTER FÜRST

See, what a festival! The children still
Will think upon this day, grey-headed men.

[Girls bring in the hat borne upon a pole; the whole stage fills with people.]

RUODI

Here is the hat, whereto they bid us bow.

BAUMGARTEN

What shall be done with it? Will some one
say?

WALTER FÜRST

God! Underneath this hat my grandson stood!

SEVERAL VOICES

Destroy the emblem of the tyrant's power!
Into the fire with it!

WALTER FÜRST

Nay, preserve it!

It was the tool of tyranny, it shall be
The everlasting sign of liberty!

[The countryfolk, men, women, and children stand and sit picturesquely grouped in a great half-circle upon the beams of the broken scaffolding.]

MELCHTHAL

Now blithely on the ruins do we stand
 Of tyranny, and gloriously fulfilled
 The oath is, comrades, that we swore at Rütli.

WALTER FÜRST

The work is but begun, not yet accomplished.
 Now have we need of courage, firm accord,
 For be assured the king will not delay
 To avenge the Landgrave's death, and to restore
 With a strong hand him that was dispossessed.

MELCHTHAL

Let him come hither, with his warlike host!
 The foe within is banished, spite of all;
 The foeman from without we will encounter.

RUODI

Few passes give him access to the land,
 These with our bodies will we close to him!

BAUMGARTEN

We are united by a deathless tie,
 And all his armed hosts shall not affright us.

[*Enter RÖSSELMANN and STAUFFACHER*

RÖSSELMANN *as he comes in*

These are the awful sentences of God.

COUNTRYFOLK

What is it? Speak!

RÖSSELMANN

In what a time we live!

WALTER FÜRST

Say on! What, Master Werner, is that you?
What is your news?

COUNTRYFOLK

What is it?

RÖSSELMANN

Hear and marvel!

STAUFFACHER

We are disburthened of a load of fear.

RÖSSELMANN

The Emperor is murdered!

WALTER FÜRST

Gracious God!

[*The countryfolk throng round Stauffacher
in great excitement.*]

ALL

Murdered! The Emperor! What, the Em-
peror murdered!

MELCHTHAL

Impossible! Whence did these tidings reach
you?

STAUFFACHER

'Tis past all doubt. At Bruck King Albrecht
fell

By a murderer's hand. The news a trusty man,
Johannes Müller, from Schaff hausen brought.

WALTER FÜRST

Who hath adventured such a deed of horror?

STAUFFACHER

The doer makes the deed more horrible.
 His nephew, his own brother's child it was,
 The Archduke John of Swabia struck the blow.

MELCHTHAL

What urged him to the parricidal deed ?

STAUFFACHER

The Emperor his ancestral fief withheld,
 Whereto with peevish importunity
 He urged his claim. He meant to dock him of
 it

Wholly, they said, and with a bishop's mitre
 To fub him off. But be that as it may
 On evil counsellors the lad did chance,
 Comrades-at-arms, to whom he lent his ear,
 And with the noble lords of Eschenbach,
 Of Tegerfelden, von der Wart, and Palm,
 Resolved, since Justice he could nowise find,
 He would seek vengeance with his own right
 hand.

WALTER FÜRST

Oh say, how was the monstrous deed accom-
 plished ?

STAUFFACHER

The King was riding down from Baden Castle,
 To come unto his court, which lay at Rhein-
 feld.
 With him were Princes John and Leopold,
 And many high-born lords were in his train ;
 And when they reached the Reuss, where is a
 ferry,

The murd'ers pressed into the boat and parted
 The Emperor from his train. Then as the
 Prince

Through a ploughed field was riding—people
 say

An antique mighty city lies beneath it
 From pagan times—there in full sight of Haps-
 burg,

The ancient fastness whence his house grew great,
 Into his throat Duke John his dagger plunged,
 Rudolph von Palm transfixed him with his spear,
 And Eschenbach did cleave his skull in twain;
 And so he fell and wallowed in his blood,
 On his own land, by his own kinsmen slain.
 Upon the further shore they saw the deed,
 Yet sundered by the stream could only raise
 An impotent and horror-stricken wail;
 But a poor woman sat there by the way,
 And in her lap the Emperor bled to death.

MELCHTHAL

So he whose greed the whole wide world did
 crave,

He hath but dug his own untimely grave!

STAUFFACHER

O'er all the land a monstrous terror broods!
 Barred are the mountain passes, one and all!
 Upon its borders every state keeps guard.
 Zürich herself, the ancient town, her gates
 That thirty years wide open stood hath shut,
 The murderers fearing, fearing more the avengers.
 For, wielding the dread curse of outlawry,
 The Queen of Hungary, the stern Agnes comes,
 That to the mercy of her tender sex

A stranger is, her father's royal blood
 On all his murderers' kith and kin to wreak,
 Upon their servants, children, children's children,
 Nay, even on their castles' very stones.
 Whole generations hath she sworn to send
 Down to her father's grave, in blood to bathe
 As in May-dew.

MELCHTHAL

Have they intelligence
 Whither the murderers have taken flight ?

STAUFFACHER

They fled incontinent, when the deed was done,
 Along five several highroads, each from each,
 And parted ne'er to see each other more.
 Duke John, they say, is straying in the mountains.

WALTER FÜRST

And thus their evil deed bears them no fruit ;
 For vengeance bears no fruit—herself she is
 Her own dread nutriment, her revelry
 Is murder, her satiety dismay !

STAUFFACHER

Their crime unto the murderers brings no gain,
 But we with hands unstained of blood, we pluck
 A blessed harvest from their bloody deed.
 We are disburthened of a crushing fear.
 The greatest foe of liberty is fallen.
 The sceptre, so 'tis bruited, from the house
 Of Hapsburg to another stock will pass,
 The Empire will assert its right of choice.

WALTER FÜRST *and* SEVERAL

Have you heard aught ?

STAUFFACHER

The Count of Luxembourg
By a majority of voices is
Already designated.

WALTER FÜRST

Well for us
That loyally we clave unto the Empire!
Now is there hope of justice.

STAUFFACHER

The new lord
Hath need of doughty allies. He will be
A shield 'twixt us and Austria's revenge.

[*The countryfolk embrace each other.*
Enter SACRISTAN with an IM-
PERIAL COURIER.

SACRISTAN

Here are the honoured fathers of the land.

RÖSSELMANN *and* SEVERAL

What is it, Sacristan?

SACRISTAN

This writing brings
A courier of the Empire.

ALL, *to Walter Fürst*

Break the seal

And read.

WALTER FÜRST, *reads*

“Unto the well-beloved men
Of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, these
Queen Elsbeth sends, with grace and kindly
greeting.”

SEVERAL VOICES

What would the Queen? Her empire's at an
end.

WALTER FÜRST, *reads*

“In her deep woe and grief of widowhood
Wherein the bloody passing of her lord
Hath plunged the Queen, she still doth bear in
mind
The Switzers' ancient loyalty and love.”

MELCHTHAL

In her fair fortune hath she ne'er done that!

RÖSELMANN

Hush, let us hear!

WALTER FÜRST, *reads*

“And she doth nothing doubt her trusty people
Will hold the accurséd doers of this deed
In righteous horror. Wherefore she awaits
From the three lands, that they the murderers
Will in no wise abet, but rather lend
Their loyal aid, into the avenger's hand
To give them up, mindful of all the love
And ancient favour which they have received
From Rudolph's princely house.”

[*Signs of dissent amongst the countrymen.*]

SEVERAL VOICES

The love and favour!

STAUFFACHER

We have had favour at the father's hands,
What favour can we boast of from the son?
Hath he confirmed the charter of our freedom,
As before him the Emperors all have done?

Hath he with just decrees delivered justice,
 And lent his shield to innocence oppressed?
 Hath he so much as deigned to hear the envoys
 The which we sent to him in our despair?
 Not one of all these things the King hath done
 By us, and had we not ourselves righted our
 wrongs

With our own stalwart hands, him our distress
 Had never touched. What! Thanks to him?
 Not thanks

Hath he earned in these valleys. He stood
 high

Upon an eminence, he might have been
 A father to his people, but he chose
 To take no thought for any but his own.
 Whom he increased, let them his fate bemoan!

WALTER FÜRST

We will not make us merry at his fall,
 Not now recall the evil he hath wrought us;
 Nay, be that thought far from us! But that we
 The King's death should avenge, that never did
 A kindness to us, and should hunt them down
 That never grieved us, that behoves us not
 Nor can. A free-will offering love must be.
 Bonds worn but by constraint death snaps in two;
 From us to him is nothing further due.

MELCHTHAL

And if the Queen within her chamber weeps,
 And if her stormy grief arraigns high Heaven,
 Here you behold, lifting to that same Heaven
 Its grateful vows, a people freed from fears.
 Love must ye sow if ye would harvest tears.

[*Exit Imperial Courier.*]

STAUFFACHER, *to the people*

But where is Tell? Must he alone be lacking
That is the founder of our freedom. He
Hath done the greatest, he the worst hath borne.
Come all, come, let us to his house repair,
And hail our general deliverer.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II

INTERIOR OF TELL'S HOUSE

*A fire is burning on the hearth. The door
stands open, giving a view outside.*

HEDWIG, WALTER, and WILLIAM

HEDWIG

To-day comes father. Children, dearest children,
He is alive and free, we all are free,
And he that saved the country is your father.

WALTER

And I was there as well, mother. Me too
With father must you mention. Father's shaft
Whizzed past within a hair's breadth of my life,
And yet I never winced.

HEDWIG, *embracing him*

Aye, thou art given
Back to my heart again. Twice have I borne
thee,

Twice have I felt for thee a mother's pangs.
'Tis past and gone—I have you both, aye both,
And the dear father comes again to-day.

[*A monk appears at the house door.*]

WILLIAM

Look, mother, look ! There stands a holy
 boy friar.
 Doubtless he comes to beg an alms of you.

HEDWIG

Bring him within, that he may be refreshed,
 And feel himself come to the house of joy.

*[Goes within, and comes back shortly
 with a tankard.]*

WILLIAM, *to the monk*

Come, come, good man, mother will glad your
 heart
 With meat and drink.

WALTER

Come, rest, and leave us strengthened.

MONK, *looking around him with perturbed
 features*

Where am I ? Tell me in what land I am.

WALTER

Are you astray, that you naught know thereof ?
 You are at Bürglen, Sir, i' the land of Uri,
 There where men turn into the Schächen-dale.

MONK, *to Hedwig who comes back*

Are you alone ? Is not your husband in ?

HEDWIG

E'en now I wait him, but what ails you, man ?
 You look not like to one that bringeth blessing.
 Be what you will, you're needy, take and drink.

[Reaches him the tankard.]

MONK

Howe'er my fainting heart doth languish for
A cordial draught, I'll touch naught—till you
swear—

HEDWIG

Touch not my garment—come not nigh me—
hold
Yourself aloof, if you would have me hear.

MONK

Swear by this fire that flickers hospitably,
By the beloved head of these your boys
Which here I clasp— [Seizing the boys.

HEDWIG

What is your purpose, man?
Back from my children! Back! You are no
monk!
You are not! In that raiment peace doth
dwell—
Peace dwells not in your features.

MONK

Of all men
I am the most unhappy!

HEDWIG

Misery
Doth eloquently speak unto the heart,
But from thy glance my very soul doth shrink.

WALTER, *springing up*

Mother! There's father! [Hastens out.

HEDWIG

O my God!

[*She is about to follow, trembles, and stands still.*]

WILLIAM, *hurrying after*

There's father!

WALTER, *without*

There thou art back again!

WILLIAM, *without*

Father, dear father!

TELL, *without*

Here I am back again! Where is your mother?

[*They enter.*]

WALTER

There by the door she stands, but can no further
She is a-tremble so with fear and joy.

TELL

O Hedwig, Hedwig, mother of my children!
Us hath God helped! No tyrant more shall
part us!

HEDWIG, *on his neck*

O Tell, what anguish have I borne for thee!

[*The Monk grows attentive.*]

TELL

Forget it now, and live for joy alone!
Here am I back again! This is my cot!
I stand again on mine inheritance!

WILLIAM

Where is thy crossbow, father, what of that?
I see it not.

TELL

Nor wilt thou see it more.
'Tis treasured up within a holy place.
It shall not serve again in any chase.

HEDWIG

O Tell! Tell!

[*Falls back and frees his hand.*]

TELL

What affrights thee, dearest wife?

HEDWIG

How—how dost thou come back to me? This
hand—
Can I return its clasp? This hand—O God!

TELL, *frankly and boldly*

It hath defended you and saved the land!
I do not fear to lift it up to Heaven.

[*The Monk makes a sudden gesture ;
Tell perceives him.*]

Who is the friar here?

HEDWIG

Ah! I forgot him.
Speak with him thou, I shudder in his presence!

MONK, *drawing near*

Say, art thou Tell, by whom the Landgrave fell?

TELL

Aye, I am he! From none I seek to hide it.

MONK

So thou art Tell? Oh! 'Tis the hand of God
That led me 'neath your roof!

TELL, *measuring him with his eyes*

Thou art no monk!

What art thou?

MONK

Thou the Landgrave slewest, him
That wrought thee evil, I too slew a foe
That did deny me justice; your foe too
He was, I freed the land of him—

TELL, *starting back*

You are—

O horror! Children! children! go within!
Go, dearest wife! Go, go! Unhappy man,
You are then—

HEDWIG

God, who is it?

TELL

Never ask!

Away, away! The children must not hear.
Go from the house—far hence—thou must not
stay
'Neath one same roof with this man.

HEDWIG

Woe is me!

What is this? Come!

[*Goes with her children.*]

TELL, *to the Monk*

You are the Duke of Austria!
You are the Duke! The Emperor have you
slain,
Your uncle and your lord.

JOHN THE PARRICIDE

He was the robber
Of mine inheritance.

TELL

Your uncle slain!
Your Emperor! And the Earth still bears you,
and
The sun still shines upon you!

JOHN THE PARRICIDE

Hear me, Tell!
Before you—

TELL

Dripping with the blood
Of parricide and regicide, you dare
In mine unsullied house set foot—you dare
To show your countenance to a good man,
And crave his hospitality—

THE PARRICIDE

With you
I hoped I should find mercy. You, like me,
Took vengeance on your foe.

TELL

Unhappy man!
What, with a father's righteous self-defence
Canst thou confound ambition's bloody guilt?

The dear head of thy children hast thou shielded?
 The sanctuary of the hearth defended?
 Warded the worst, the utmost, from thine own?
 To Heaven I lift mine all-unspeckled hands,
 Thee and thy deed I curse! Avenged have I
 The sanctities of nature—thou hast done them
 Foul wrong. I have no portion with thee.
 Murdered
 Hast thou, my dearest I have shielded!

THE PARRICIDE

You thrust me from you comfortless, despairing?

TELL

A horror thrills me, whilst I talk with thee.
 Hence! Wander on thine own appalling way!
 Leave undefiled the abode of innocence!

PARRICIDE, *turns to go*

So can I not nor will not longer live!

TELL

And yet I pity thee! Thou God of Heaven!
 So young, and sprung of such a noble stock!
 Grandson of Rudolph! Of my Lord and
 Emperor!
 A fleeing murderer! upon my threshold—
 The poor man's threshold, pleading and despair-
 ing— *[Veils his face.]*

THE PARRICIDE

If you know how to weep, oh, let my fate
 Move you to pity! It is terrible!
 I am a Prince—I was one—naught forbade
 My happiness, if but I could have curbed

Mine onward-vaulting wishes. Envy gnawed
 Upon my heart. The youth of Leopold,
 My cousin, crowned with honours, and with lands
 Enriched I saw, whilst I, that was with him
 Like old, was held in slavish tutelage.

TELL

Unhappy man, thine uncle knew thee well
 When he withheld thy lands and liegfolk from
 thee.

Thyself, thy passionate and frantic deed
 Fearfully justified his wise resolve.
 Where are the bloody partners of thy murder?

THE PARRICIDE

Whither avenging Furies urge their flight.
 Since the dread deed I have not looked upon
 Their faces.

TELL

Knowest thou thou art pursued
 By outlawry, forbidden to the friend
 And to the foe abandoned?

THE PARRICIDE

Aye, I know,
 And shun all open roads. Upon no hut
 I dare to knock. Towards the wilderness
 I turn my footsteps, wand'ring o'er the mountains
 A terror to myself, and from myself
 I start back shuddering, if perchance I see
 Mine own ill-omened image in the stream.
 O, if you feel compassion, human-kindness—

[Falls down before him.]

TELL, with averted face

Arise! Arise!

THE PARRICIDE

Not till you reach your hand
To help me.

TELL

Can I help you? Can a man
Help Sin? Yet rise. How dread soe'er the
deed

That you have done, you are a man, I too.
From Tell shall no man part uncomforted.
What I can do, I will.

THE PARRICIDE

*[Leaping to his feet, and grasping Tell's
hand vehemently.]*

O Tell! You save
My soul from sheer despair!

TELL

Let go my hand!
You must away, for undiscovered here
You cannot tarry, nor discovered, count
On shelter. Whither do you think to turn?
Where hope you to find rest?

THE PARRICIDE

Do I know? Ah!

TELL

Then hear what God hath put into mine heart.
You must to Italy, to St Peter's city.
At the Pope's feet yourself cast down, confess
To him your guilt, and so redeem your soul.

THE PARRICIDE

Will he not give me up to the avenger?

TELL

What he doth by you, take it as from God.

THE PARRICIDE

How shall I come into the unknown land?
 I do not know the way, I do not dare
 To company with other wayfarers.

TELL

I will describe thy way. Give thou good heed.
 Upwards it lies, along the Reuss's course,
 That wildly rushing, plunges from the moun-
 tain—

THE PARRICIDE, *horror-stricken*

The Reuss, say you? Its waters saw my crime!

TELL

The pathway skirts the precipice. 'Tis marked
 By many crosses, reared in memory
 Of travellers whom the avalanche hath whelmed.

THE PARRICIDE

I fear not Nature's terrors, can I quell
 The fiercely raging torments of my breast.

TELL

Before each cross fall down, and expiate
 With scalding tears of penitence thy guilt.
 And if unhurt thou pass the road of horror,
 If from the icy ridge its avalanche
 The mountain hurls not down upon thine head,
 Thou'lt come unto the Bridge of Drizzling
 Spray.

If that beneath the burden of thy guilt
 Founder not, if thou leave that too unhurt,
 There yawns a rocky portal black as night—
 Day hath ne'er lit it—through it lies thy path.

Into a smiling vale of bliss 'twill lead thee,
 Yet thou with hurried tread must hasten through.
 Not thine to tarry there where peace abides.

THE PARRICIDE

Oh Rudolph! Rudolph! royal ancestor,
 Thus doth thy grandson enter thy domain!

TELL

Thus climbing ever wilt thou reach the heights
 Of Gothard, whereon lie the eternal meres
 That straight from Heaven's streams are
 plenishéd.

There wilt thou take thy leave of German soil,
 And dancing merrily another stream
 Will lead thee down to Italy, for thee
 The Promised Land.

[*The Ranz des Vaches is heard, winded
 upon many Alpine horns.*

Hark! I hear voices! Hence!

HEDWIG, *hastens in*

Where art thou, Tell? My father comes.
 There come
 All the confederates in merry train.

THE PARRICIDE, *shrouding himself*

Woe's me! With happy men I may not
 tarry!

TELL

Go, dearest wife. Refresh this man with food,
 And load him with thy bounty, for his way
 Is long, and he will find no sheltering roof.
 Haste thee! They near.

HEDWIG

Who is't?

TELL

Seek not to know,
 And when he goes, turn thou thine eyes aside,
 Lest haply they behold what way he wanders.

[The Parricide goes towards Tell with a swift movement, but the latter waves him away with his hand, and goes. When both have gone off in different directions, the scene changes, and shows the

LAST SCENE

The whole bottom of the valley before Tell's house, together with the heights which enclose it, filled with countryfolk, who group themselves into a picturesque whole. Others come marching over a lofty wooden footbridge, that leads over the Schächen. WALTER FÜRST, with the two boys, MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER, come forward. Others throng after them. As TELL comes out, all welcome him with loud rejoicing.

ALL

Long life to Tell, the Archer and Deliverer !

[Whilst those in front press around Tell and embrace him, appear further RUDENZ and BERTHA, the former embracing the countryfolk, the latter Hedwig. The music from the mountains accompanies this mute scene. When it is ended, Bertha steps into the midst of the people.

BERTHA

Landsmen! Confederates! Me into your
league

Receive, the first that am so fortunate
As to find refuge in the land of freedom.
Into your stalwart hands I lay my rights.
Will you protect me as your fellow-burgess?

LANDSFOLK

We will, with life and limb, whate'er befall!

BERTHA

Then to this youth my hand, here in your sight,
The free Swiss maid to the free man I plight!

RUDENZ

And free do I declare my bondsmen all!
[*The music suddenly bursts in again,
and the curtain falls.*]

Gummly

Translator's Note

IN the following appendices it has been my aim to present to the English reader in an attractive form such illustrative and explanatory matter as the subject seemed to demand. The matter itself is collected from many sources which the character of the present edition dispenses me from enumerating in detail. In a few cases the obligation is greater than usual, and here I desire to make my acknowledgments. For the elucidation of the text I am largely indebted to Düntzer's annotations; for the History of the Swiss Confederacy to F. Grenfell Baker's "Model Republic"; for the substance of the analogues to the Tell-Myth to S. Baring-Gould's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," and the introduction to Dasent's "Popular Tales from the Norse."

For the translations from Tschudi in Appendix II., and for those of the illustrative extracts scattered throughout the notes, I am myself responsible.

A. G. L.

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September 1903.

Appendices

I

HISTORY OF THE SWISS CONFEDERACY

THE Switzerland of to-day is a Federal Republic consisting of twenty-two States or Cantons, differing widely in race, language, religion and extent. These States acceded to the Confederation at different dates throughout a period of some five hundred years, and under very various circumstances. The nucleus around which they gathered was formed by the league of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden (A.D. 1291), and it is the establishment of this league that furnishes the main substance of the plot of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*.

Schiller drew his material, as we shall see, chiefly from the simple and graphic narrative of the chronicler Tschudi (Appendix II). But Tschudi's narrative was not written until the 16th century, and by his day the story was already largely overlaid with legendary matter. It is not only that the Tell-legend has been grafted on to the story of Austrian oppression and of the secret league founded upon the Rütli, but there is good reason to suppose that

this oppression has been at least greatly exaggerated, and that the Rütli league is itself legendary, the historical facts upon which the story is grounded having been compressed within a much shorter space of time than they actually occupied, just as Schiller himself has again condensed them in order to bring them all within the scope of his dramatic action.

The kernel of truth is the enfranchisement of the mountainous districts of Central Europe from the Austrian yoke, by no means so short and simple a process as it appears in the *Tell*. It is proposed to narrate here in brief outline the history of Switzerland as it reveals itself to the more scientific investigations of modern historians, and to sketch concurrently so much of the History of the Holy Roman Empire as is indispensable to a right understanding of the distinction so frequently drawn in the *Tell* between that Empire and the Princely House of Hapsburg.

With the earliest inhabitants of the country of whom we have any trace—the lake-dwellers, who are known to us only by the remains of their huts built upon piles driven into the lakes—we are here not concerned, interesting as the subject intrinsically is. It is not even agreed upon amongst historians whether or not these primitive inhabitants are to be identified with the Keltic tribes, the Helvetii and Rhæti, who like so many other barbarian or semi-barbarian peoples, first emerge into the light of history on the occasion of their con-

Lake-dwellers.

Helvetii and Rhæti—their conquest by Rome.

flict with the Romans. These too concern us very little with regard to our present purpose. It is sufficient to say that they were reduced to subjection by the Romans, and that the territories of Helvetia and Rhætia, covering the larger portion of the modern Switzerland, remained subject to Rome for the next four centuries, during which they became completely Romanised. One of the chief Roman military stations in the North was Vindonissa, upon the site of which arose, at a later date, the castle of Hapsburg, the cradle of the Hapsburg dynasty. (See note to page 171.)

Within the Roman borders there reigned settled order and peace, but upon the bulwarks of the Empire beat ever a restless sea of barbarism, which splashed over a wave from time to time, and ultimately, as the dams grew weaker, poured its living flood into the very heart of the Empire.

The impulse to the barbarian advance seems to have been communicated from Central Asia. The pressure of the fierce hordes that dwelt there was propagated from people to people

*Occupation
of Helvetia
and
Rhætia by
Teutonic
tribes.*

throughout the Central European Plain, and stimulated, even if it did not originate, that shifting of the seats of the Teutonic races which is known as the Migration of the Tribes (*Völkerwanderung*).

The movement culminated in the erection of the kingdoms of the Goths in Spain and Italy, of the Vandals in Africa, of the Franks in Gaul; the occupation of our own island by Jutes, Saxons and Angles was but one wave of it; whilst other waves peopled the Roman

provinces of Helvetia and Rhætia with Teutonic settlers, who, blending more or less completely with the natives, and accepting from them or imposing upon them their laws and customs, according as they were more or less numerous, more or less touched by civilisation themselves, became the ancestors of the Swiss people of to-day.

Thus western Helvetia was occupied by the Burgundians. Already Christianised and partially civilised, they readily blended with the conquered race, and accepted from them the language and civilisation of the Romans. The district in which they settled forms the French-speaking Switzerland of the present day. In the dramatic action of the *Tell* they play no part, though the dying Attinghausen, in his prophetic vision (Act IV. sc. ii.), refers to the independent growth of the spirit of freedom in these districts, destined at a later date to join the Swiss confederacy.

Rhætia was peopled by the Goths, who had already established themselves in Italy. It coincided approximately with the modern canton of the Grisons. It fought out its own independence, and existed for a while as a separate republic, being incorporated with the Swiss confederacy only at the beginning of last century.

North-eastern Helvetia was occupied by the Alemanni, an untamed and warlike race, who enslaved the conquered people, destroyed the Roman civilisation, and established their own language and customs in its stead. The land that fell to their lot is the German-speaking

Switzerland of to-day. It is their descendants *Alemanni*, who are the actors in the drama of Swiss enfranchisement, and a portion of the territory thus peopled by them—the shores of Lake Lucerne—is its scene. Of their migration into that territory the inhabitants had themselves a tradition, preserved in the so-called *Ostfriesenlied*, and utilised by Schiller in his drama (See Act II. sc. ii., p. 67, and note). According to this story the Switzers were of Scandinavian stock, and it is at least noteworthy that of the various analogues to the Tell-legend found amongst different Teutonic peoples, that which presents the nearest parallel is a Danish story. (See Appendix III.) Some have even fancied that they have detected traces of Scandinavian speech and of Scandinavian blood in the men of Oberhasli (the *Whiteland* of the legend). It is more likely, however, that these resemblances are to be explained by the kinship of the *Alemanni* themselves with the Scandinavians, both being members of the great Teutonic family of nations.

It is possible that in another respect the tradition contains a kernel of truth. In the less accessible and less attractive portions of the country, in the Forest Cantons about the shores of Lake Lucerne, the *Alemanni* may possibly have been the earliest inhabitants, occupying under the pressure of neighbouring tribes what had hitherto been an unreclaimed wilderness. The failure to find remains of lake-dwellings in Lake Lucerne, whereas they abound in most

of the Swiss lakes, lends some support to this view.

The occupation of Helvetia by Teutonic tribes began as early as the third century of our era. By the middle of the fifth century the Burgundians and the Alemanni were firmly established in the western and north-eastern portions respectively. In the process by which the States of modern Europe were evolved from the

Burgundians and Alemanni conquered by the Franks. wreck of the Roman Empire, the province of Helvetia underwent a series of political vicissitudes which can here be barely indicated. Burgundians and Alemanni were both reduced to subjection by their powerful kinsfolk the Franks, who had established themselves in Romanised Gaul.

Chlodwig, the Frankish conqueror, in fulfilment of a vow made before the defeat of the

Conversion of the Alemanni to Christianity. Alemanni, became a convert to Christianity, and imposed his new religion upon the vanquished. But the actual conversion of the Alemanni to Christianity was effected by

Columbanus and Gallus, with a band of Culdee monks from Ireland. The spread of Christianity was accompanied by the building of monasteries, that of St Gallen being dedicated to, if not even founded by, one of the devoted missionaries. The monasteries multiplied in number, and played an important part in the history of Switzerland, acquiring feudal rights over wide lands.

For well-nigh four centuries the Franks were the dominant race in Western Europe, and

during the whole of this time Burgundy, Alemannia, and Rhætia were dependencies of the Frankish kingdom, governed by Frankish nobles bearing various titles. The Frankish kings fall into two dynasties. The first, the descendants of Chlodwig, known as Merovingians, allowed the power to slip from their grasp into that of their hereditary stewards, the Mayors of the Palace, until they themselves became the merest phantoms, and were displaced in name, as they had long been in fact, by their powerful ministers. The first of these to assume the royal title was Pipin the Small, who was proclaimed king in 751.

The new dynasty, known as Carlovingian, takes its name from its greatest representative, Charlemagne or Charles the Great, the son of Pipin. By inheritance and by conquest Charles reunited under his rule the greater part of the Western Roman Empire, and parts of Germany that had never been included in that Empire. Of his far-reaching work as a political and social organiser and patron of Letters this is not the place to speak. Yet one political act of capital importance cannot be ignored. Carrying on the policy of his immediate predecessors, he undertook the defence of the Papal See against the aggression of the Lombards, who had succeeded their Gothic kin as arbiters of North Italy. He invaded Lombardy, made himself master of the whole of Northern Italy, confirmed the gift of land made by Pipin to the Papacy

(whence originated the temporal dominion of the Popes), and, finally, in 800 A.D., having restored to Rome Pope Leo III., who had been driven out by an insurrection, he was crowned by him, on the Christmas Day of that year, Emperor of the Romans. Thus the

Revival of the Roman Empire by Charles the Great. Roman Empire was revived in the person of Charles. Nominally that Empire still existed in the East, and the Pope himself was one of its subjects. There vested in him

no legal right thus to transfer the crown. But the coronation of Charles was the recognition of an accomplished fact, the acclamation of the assembled Roman people might be regarded as the equivalent of popular election, and the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, bestowed the divine sanction and consecration upon that which Divine Providence had brought to pass.

Nominally a continuation of the Roman Empire, in reality something very different, the new Empire thus created was destined to be in some form or other the pivot of European polity for the next 1000 years. The part played by the Pope in its establishment was made the basis of a claim on the part of the Papal See to be the fountain of temporal power, and to hold in its gift the crowns of kings. Hence the long conflict between Emperors and Popes, and the rival factions of Ghibellines and Guelfs, as the supporters of either side were later to be called.

Under the Carolingians the feudal system became firmly established in Helvetia. Monasteries arose and acquired large estates. Louis

of Bavaria, the grandson of Charles the Great founded the convent of Zürich (see *Feudal system in Switzerland.* Act II. sc. ii., p. 76), of which his two sisters became abbesses, and endowed it with a large part of the Reuss valley and of Uri. The greater part of Switzerland was in a state of anarchy, the nobles in their strongholds set the king at defiance, oppressed the people and fought amongst themselves. Under the rule of the *Monasteries.* monasteries the condition of the people was generally better, yet not infrequently they aped the tyranny of the secular lords.

Our purpose does not require us to follow in detail the varying fortunes of the Carolingians, their family feuds, the partitions of the Empire of Charlemagne which gave rise to these or by which it was sought to compose them, and its transient reunion under Charles the Fat. The Carolingians degenerated as the Merovingians had done, and the heterogeneous empire of Charlemagne fell asunder into its natural elements. The western, Latinised portion, pursued its own way, growing into the kingdom of France. The eastern, German portion, continued for a while to be ruled by princes of the line of Charlemagne; on the failure of the direct line, the kingdom passed, by election of the chiefs and people, first to Conrad of Franconia, then to Henry of Saxony. With this eastern branch went the claim to the Imperial title,

Partition of the Empire of Charles the Great.

The German claim to the Roman Empire falls into abeyance.

which was perforce allowed to lapse for a time, together with the claim to dominion in Italy. Italy fell into anarchy. Lombard dukes disputed the crown with each other, and other claimants arose at home and abroad. One of these from time to time was crowned Emperor by the Pope, but none was able to assert his authority in Italy, whilst abroad his very title was not recognised.

In the meantime both in Burgundy and in Alemannia independent rulers had established themselves, but had been constrained to admit the suzerainty of the German kings. Thus Helvetia passed under the dominion of the Empire, of which it formed an integral portion for the next four centuries.

The policy of Henry I., the Fowler, who was elected King of the Franks on the failure of *Henry I.* the Carolingian line (918 A.D.), and may be regarded as the founder of the German Monarchy, largely contributed to mould the fortunes of Switzerland in the coming struggle for national independence. The eastern portions of Switzerland were sorely harassed by the incursions of Saracens and Hungarians. In order to oppose an obstacle to these attacks, Henry encouraged the growth of fortified cities, to which he attracted the dwellers in the country by grants of special privileges. *He encourages the growth of the cities.* The citizens organised themselves into political and military guilds, and governed themselves by a Burgomaster and Council, elected by themselves. Thus grew up the burgher-class, which formed a weighty counterpoise to the

power of the nobles and clergy, and played an important part in the later struggle for independence. Of these towns some placed themselves beneath the protection of a powerful nobleman, others, owing allegiance only to the Empire, were practically independent. The latter were afterwards known as Free Imperial Cities.

Henry was far too busy with the organisation and defence of his dominions and the recovery of Lotharingia from the West Franks to assert his rights of Empire at Rome. That task he left to his son and successor, Otto.

The immediate occasion of Otto's first descent upon Italy was romantic enough, and heralds the approaching age of chivalry. It was undertaken like the exploits of any knight-errant on behalf of a distressed lady. Adelheid, the widow of one of the puppet kings set up by the Italian aristocracy, was sought in marriage by his successor, and rejecting his suit was thrust by him into a foul dungeon. Escaping thence she bore her complaints to the feet of the knightly Otto, who himself married the widowed queen, and marching into Lombardy, compelled the tyrant to admit his suzerainty. Continued unrest in Italy, together with an offer of the Imperial title from the Pope, induced Otto to enter Italy a second time, when he was crowned Emperor by the Pope, together with Adelheid his Queen, (A.D. 962).

Thus was the Roman Empire, already restored by Charlemagne, revived a second time by a German Monarch. "By the coronation of

*Second
revival of
the Roman
Empire
under
Otto I.*

Otto, the two great powers were finally established, which as it was supposed then and for ages afterwards were indispensably necessary to govern the temporal and spiritual order of the world—the Holy Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Church. Instead of governing the world between them, as Charles and Otto dreamed, they were soon to meet in irreconcilable and fatal conflict.”

Into the details of this conflict we cannot enter. Otto the Great made and unmade Popes at his pleasure. Otto the Third nominated two pontiffs. Henry III., the second Emperor of the new Franconian line, forced upon the Roman priesthood one German Pope after another, thus bringing about that reform of the deeply-degraded Papacy, which enabled it to become in the reign of his son Henry IV., the formidable rival of the Empire itself. Under that monarch and the celebrated Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII., the rivalry drew to a head. Switzerland was involved in the sanguinary wars which ensued, whole districts were devastated and thousands of the Swiss were slain. Yet the conflict between the Empire and the Papacy, now only in its first phase, was by no means unfavourable to the cause of Swiss freedom.

The Swiss throughout were unwavering in their allegiance to the Empire, not only as against the Popes, but also as against rival Emperors or candidates for empire; but they were shrewd enough to secure a reward for their loyalty in the form of various concessions, which

*Conflict
between
the
Emperor
and the
Papacy.*

*The Swiss
consistently
loyal to the
Empire.*

strengthened their hands in the final struggle for freedom.

It was not only the municipal and other communities which saw their opportunity in the difficulties in which succeeding Emperors were embarrassed by the protracted struggle with the Papacy. The neutralisation of the imperial

*Rise of
Ducal
families.*

authority by the hostility of the Papal See favoured the aggrandisement of the imperial vassals; feudal domains were converted into hereditary possessions, their boundaries were widened from generation to generation, and ultimately the ruling families emerged as great dukes or kings, practically independent of the Empire in all but name. The history of Switzerland furnishes us with many cases in point. The house of Zähringen which furnished wise and just rulers

*Switzer-
land under
the House
of Zähringen.*

to Switzerland throughout the 12th century, came to the fore in the contest for supremacy between Henry IV. and Gregory VII. Under their dominion the war-harried country enjoyed a period of comparative peace.

The Dukes of Zähringen continued the policy of Henry the Fowler, encouraging the growth of towns as a counterpoise to the power of the nobles. More than one of the cities which they founded or fostered became a rallying-point in the struggle for independence, and two gave their names to cantons in the future Swiss confederacy. (See note to page 139.)

During the administration of the House of Zähringen we find the first instance of alliance amongst the peasant communities in protection of

their interests, together with a characteristic assertion of the spirit of independence. The occasion was a dispute between the monks of

Dispute between the men of Schwyz and the Monastery of Einsiedeln. Einsiedeln and the mountaineers of Schwyz touching the ownership of certain *alps* or mountain-pasturages. The monks claimed them under a grant of Henry II., the peasants asserted that to obtain that grant the monks had wilfully suppressed their existence and prior rights. The dispute was protracted for over a hundred years,

the peasants resisted the awards of successive Emperors in favour of the monks, and defied alike the temporal and spiritual thunderbolts—the Ban of the Empire and the Interdict of the Church. A three years' league with Uri and Unterwalden foreshadowed later events and the peasants in their mountain-fastnesses and under the protection of Swiss nobles, remained masters of the field. (See *Tell*, Act II. sc. ii., page 70, and for Müller's account see note to that page.)

On the extinction of the House of Zähringen in 1218, two other Ducal Houses that were fast rising in power became dominant in Western and Eastern Helvetia respectively. The one was the House of Savoy, the other the House of Hapsburg. The latter had its seat since 1020 in

Rise of the House of Hapsburg. Switzerland itself, in what is now the Canton of Aargau. Sprung from an obscure race of robber-knights, it was destined to a career of surpassing brilliancy, and its representative still sits upon the throne of Austria. To a member of this family the imperial crown first passed in 1273, when

Rudolph of Hapsburg was elected ¹ King of the Romans.

But the character of the Empire was now entirely changed. Under the second monarch of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, the heroic Frederick Barbarossa, it had seen the period of its greatest brilliance if not of its greatest power. The reigns of his successors saw a rapid decline in both. The strife of Pope and Emperor again entered upon an acute phase, reaching its climax under Frederic II. The victory lay with the Papal See, and the termina-

*Decline
of the
Empire.*

tion of the long fierce conflict found the strength of the Empire sapped and mined in all directions. Nobles, clergy, and towns had all waxed strong at the cost of the imperial authority. This had become merely nominal in all but the lands which the emperor held in his own right as German king, and these had been bartered or wrested away till they were but a shadow of the once wide territories of the Saxon and Franconian monarchs. The elective principle had moreover become definitely recognised in the Empire. It had indeed always been asserted in the past upon

*The
elective
principle
in the
Empire.*

the extinction of any line in which the crown had been hereditarily transmitted, and now seemed confirmed by the election of three successive Emperors. But whereas the strength of a candidate had then been his best qualification, the triumph of the elective principle

¹ The King of the Romans was the Emperor elect. The higher title did not belong to him till his coronation at Rome.

—vested no longer in all the nation, nor even in all its princes—but in three bishops and four hereditary princes, tended to the election of the weakest candidate; for the electors came to regard the Empire as a commonwealth composed of themselves, and preferred to choose an Emperor who should be but a lay-figure, wearing the trappings of Empire, but wielding none of its power. The same considerations inspired them to aim at preventing the crown from again becoming hereditary. The Emperors thus elected weakened the Empire still further both by their surrender of rights in the purchase of their election, and by their selfish exploitation of such imperial authority as remained, of which they could hope for nothing but the usufruct.

This minished authority it was which was conferred upon Rudolph of Hapsburg by his election to the Empire in A.D. 1272.

*Rudolph of
Hapsburg,
Emperor.*

Rudolph wasted no energy on the phantom of dominion beyond the Alps; he set himself strenuously to the restoration of order in his German dominions, which had fallen into anarchy during an interregnum, and to the aggrandisement of his

*He
restores the
Empire.*

house by foreign conquest, and met with such success in both endeavours as to have deserved the title of the

Second Restorer of the Empire. From the dominions of his neighbour Ottocar, King of

*Rudolph
and the
Swiss.*

Bohemia, he carved out the ample territories which were indispensable to the permanent aggrandisement of his house, and which were afterwards shaped into the Empire of Austria. In

his campaign against his own rebellious vassals he was staunchly supported by the Swiss municipalities, and the people of Switzerland in general grudged him neither their help nor their affection. It was his policy to propitiate such brave and loyal supporters, and this he did by bestowing special privileges upon them. They enjoyed his favour, he their affection throughout his lifetime.

The death of Rudolph (A.D. 1291) marks an epoch in the history of the progress of Swiss independence. It was immediately followed by the League of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, the corner-stone of the Swiss Confederacy. It is time to turn aside for a moment in order to consider the relation in which these districts stood to their powerful neighbour, the new Imperial House.

League of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden (A.D. 1291), the corner-stone of the Swiss Confederacy.

The greater part of the canton of Uri, *i.e.*, the valley of the Reuss from Lake Lucerne to the Devil's Bridge, had been granted, as we have seen, to the Abbey of Zürich. The majority of its inhabitants were accordingly serfs, or, at best, vassals, of the Abbess of Zürich. *Cf.* Act II. sc. ii., p. 76—

Political condition of Uri,

To the great Lady of Zürich I am oath-plight.

The monastic bodies were accustomed to rule their vassals through a secular officer, known as the Kastvogt, or Warden. The position was

one of considerable influence, which might easily ripen into one of feudal superiority. It was consequently much sought after by ambitious nobles. In the original gift the Abbey-lands of Zürich had been exempted from all jurisdiction save that of the Empire. Later the office of Kastvogt had been held by the House of Zähringen, amongst others. The House of Hapsburg had held it in its turn, but in 1231, under the Emperor Frederic II., an imperial rescript revoked the powers over the community of Uri that had been granted by Frederic himself to the Hapsburgs, and restored to it its original highly-valued privilege of immediate dependence upon the Empire. This privilege was confirmed by the Emperor Rudolph himself.

In Schwyz, the valleys west of Steinen were in the hands of various nobles, amongst whom were the Hapsburgs; at the foot of the Mythen was a free community of peasants. Both alike, however, were politically subject to the Emperor's delegates, and these were at the time in question the same ever more widely encroaching Hapsburgs. In 1240 the Emperor Frederick II. granted to the men of Schwyz a charter placing them in the same privileged position as the men of Uri. This the Hapsburgs contrived to make a dead-letter, and it would seem that it was not confirmed, as had been the charter of Uri, by Rudolph, the first Emperor of that House.

Unterwalden was very differently situated from either of these. It formed a part of the personal domain of the Hapsburgs, as Counts

of the Zürichgau and Aargau. The soil was owned by many ecclesiastical and lay lords, including the Hapsburgs and the Abbey of Murbach, of which the Hapsburgs held the wardenship. Thus there were no privileged tenants, as in Uri, nor any free community as in Schwyz; hence the more tardy progress of Unterwalden towards independence, and the less prominent part played by it in the vindication of Swiss liberty. Cf. Act II. sc. ii., p. 65—

SACRISTAN

*There are three peoples of us. Whose the right
The Head to furnish to our Parliament?*

MEIER

*Let Schwyz contend with Uri for this honour,
We men of Unterwalden waive the claim.*

MELCHTHAL

*We waive the claim! We are petitioners
That crave assistance from our powerful friends.*

From this brief sketch, it is easy to perceive the overwhelming preponderance of the power of the House of Hapsburg even within the Forest Cantons themselves. When it is remembered moreover that by every means in their power, just or unjust, they had been and still were extending their dominions in the surrounding territories until

Predominance of the Hapsburgs in Switzerland.

Rudenz could justly say of the Hapsburg emperor—

*We in his lands as in a net immeshed
Are compassed round about on every side,*

Act II. sc. i., p. 51,

it will be seen that the cause of Swiss freedom trembled in the balance. The Switzers' one hope lay in the Empire, too weak itself to menace their freedom, yet possibly strong enough to shield them from its own encroaching vassal—able at the very least to put them formally in the right in the struggle they were themselves prepared to wage against absorption. When the Imperial authority, weakened though it was, passed into the hands of Rudolph of Hapsburg, a crisis was at hand, though it was tided over by the policy of that prince; but when, upon his death, there was a danger lest that authority, now greatly enhanced, should become permanently resident in the Hapsburg family, the crisis became acute. The Swiss took the alarm, and sought to provide against the menace to their independence by the League of 1291.

The parchment inscribed with the terms of this League, and sealed with the common seals

Substance of the League of 1291. of the three communities, still exists. It is the Magna Charta of Swiss liberty. It describes itself as a renewal of the old league, of which nothing is known to history. In it

the three cantons pledge themselves to mutual aid against aggression, undertake to assist each other in the administration of justice by the extradition of fugitive criminals, decline to

recognise any judge who has bought his office or is not a native of the valleys, reserve to the feudal lords their legal rights, and recognise the principle of arbitration in the settlement of disputes among themselves.

For the moment the thunder-cloud passed away. The electors were no more willing

Adolph of Nassau elected Emperor. than the Swiss Woodsteds that the imperial dignity should again vest in one House, and, to the great chagrin of Albrecht, Rudolph's heir, they appointed to it Adolph

of Nassau. Albrecht did not acquiesce in this rebuff, and a sanguinary contest ensued, in which, as usual, the Swiss rallied to the banners of the Emperor, and were rewarded by the confirmation of their charters. In 1298 the two rivals met in single combat upon the field of Göllheim, and Adolph fell, leaving Albrecht in undisputed possession of the Empire.

The foresight of the Swiss was justified by the event. The new Hapsburg Emperor

Albrecht of Hapsburg Emperor. refused to ratify the charters of his predecessor. Conscious of a power more firmly based than had been that of his father—irritated, as

we may suppose, by the Swiss support given to his rival—he brought to bear his imperial and feudal authority alike upon the transference of the Swiss allegiance from the Empire, which might possibly pass out of his family again, to his own dynasty.

We have thus brought our narrative down to the point at which the story is taken up by Schiller's play, and by the Chronicle of Tschudi,

upon which that play is founded. For the traditional history of the confederacy the reader is referred to the translations from Tschudi, given in Appendix II., and for the critical reasons which necessitate the rejection of the greater part of this traditional history, to the excursus upon the Tell-legend in Appendix III. Suffice it to say here that not only the whole story of Tell, but the Oath upon the Rütli, and the very existence of Gessler, derive no support from historical investigation, whilst the atrocities of the Austrian Landvögte or Baillies are at least greatly exaggerated. That the Swiss resisted the encroachments of Austria is certain; that they rose in arms and expelled the baillies is not improbable; that they were freed for a while from the Austrian menace by the murder of Albrecht, slain by his nephew Duke John in a private quarrel, as related by Tschudi (see Appendix II. p. 256), is matter of history.

Once again the Electors asserted their liberty of choice by conferring the crown upon Henry of Luxemburg, and once again the new Emperor confirmed the charters of the Swiss. Not for more than a century did the Austrian House again wield the imperial sceptre.

With the death of Albrecht the action of Schiller's drama terminates. In reality the struggle was yet to begin. The League of 1291 had mounted guard over the rights of the Woodsteads, but had as yet uttered no call to arms. The Rütli League of the poet had secured the

expulsion of the baillies, but had not yet confronted the vengeance of Austria. Schiller rounds off his subject by putting into the mouth of the dying Attinghausen (Act IV. sc. ii., p. 139) a prophecy of the heroic feats—historical, too, this time—which the Confederacy was still to achieve. A brief account of these will fitly terminate the present narrative.

Ludwig of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria rival candidates for empire. In 1313 the death of the Emperor, Henry VII., left the imperial throne again vacant. Claims were put forward on behalf of two candidates, Ludwig of Bavaria and Frederick of Austria, the son of the Emperor Albrecht, who was not prepared to see the crown pass by him a second time.

The Switzers raid the Abbey of Einsiedeln. During the interregnum the men of Schwyz, for some reason which is not sufficiently clear, fell upon the monastery of Einsiedeln, smashed, burned and plundered, and carried off a band of monks captive to Schwyz. It is likely that the raid was an incident in the civil strife arising from the rival candidature for empire, for Frederick was Warden of the Abbey of Einsiedeln, whilst the Swiss, in pursuance of their constant policy, were partisans of that competitor who was not a Hapsburg. Moreover, upon the election of Ludwig, he at once freed the Schwyzers from the Ban of the Empire, laid upon them for this deed, and used his influence with the Archbishop of Mainz to secure the revocation of

the sentence of excommunication which they had likewise incurred.

The Swiss support of Ludwig of Bavaria, and the chagrin of Frederick of Hapsburg at his second rebuff, doubtless envenomed still further the Austrian hatred of the Woodsteads. In *Battle of Morgarten*, A.D. 1315. 1315 we find Leopold, Duke of Austria, the second son of Albrecht, leading an army of 15,000 or 20,000 men, including heavy cavalry, into the Swiss territory, with the avowed intention of exterminating the audacious rustics.

The Switzers, warned of the Austrian plans by a friendly baron—say the chroniclers—prepared to defend the Pass of *Morgarten*, through which the invaders purposed to enter their land. Waiting until the Austrian army had defiled into the pass, they hurled down upon them trunks of trees and huge boulders from the neighbouring mountains. In the midst of the ensuing panic the mountaineers, a mere handful in numbers, fell upon their invaders. The mailed knights had no foothold upon the frozen slopes. It was the middle of November, and the peasants with their hobnails had things all their own way. What followed was a butchery rather than a battle. The Austrians were stricken helplessly to the ground, and hundreds were driven into the neighbouring lake. The flower of Austrian chivalry fell, and Duke Leopold himself hardly made good his escape, with a small band of followers.

The Swiss followed up their victory by a renewal of the League of 1291, to which the

Emperor Ludwig gave his sanction. The suzerainty of the Empire was fully acknowledged, as well as the rights of feudal overlords, but the encroachments of the latter were to be resisted.

*Renewal
of the
League of
1291.*

The parties to this league are still Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden. They are known as the *original cantons*.

*The
"original
cantons."*

The most characteristic features in the history of the next period are the growth in wealth and power of the free imperial cities, and their feuds and alliances amongst themselves. Amongst these Berne in particular grew to such power as to provoke the jealousy of the neighbouring nobility, who organised a powerful league against her. The opposing forces met at *Laupen* 1339, when the Bernese, assisted by a contingent from the Woodsteads, gained a signal victory.

*Battle of
Laupen,
A.D. 1339.*

In the sequence of events, which cannot here be traced, the original League of the Three Cantons received a series of accessions which by 1353 brought its number up to eight, known as the *eight ancient places*. Lucerne joined the confederacy in 1332, Zürich in 1351, Glarus and Zug in 1352, Berne in 1353. Yet—though all were in alliance with the Woodsteads—they were not bound by any common federal tie, though linked together in a confusing system of cross alliances. Neither did Austria tamely look on at the growth of the league whose primary bond of union was hatred and

*The
"eight
ancient
places."*

distrust of herself. She disputed the accession of Lucerne, laid siege to Zürich in 1352, and in 1354 invoked the aid of the Empire to break up the confederation. The city of Zürich was again beleaguered by a combined force of Imperial and Austrian troops, but the Imperial troops were shortly withdrawn, and thus the siege fell through.

Austria opposes the League.

Sieges of Zürich,
A.D. 1352
and 1354.

In 1368 Austria was again at war with the Woodsteads. From 1368 to 1386 the country enjoyed a breathing space, disturbed only by minor struggles. Then the peace was again broken, and Duke Leopold II., the grandson of Albrecht, marched an army of 6000 picked soldiers against Lucerne, with whom in the first place her quarrel was. At *Sempach* he was

Battle of Sempach,
A.D. 1386.

confronted by the confederates, who mustered short of 2000 men. The Swiss, ill-armed and on foot, with boards strapped upon their left arms in the guise of shields, faltered before the bristling line of spears. Then Arnold Struthan von Winkelried—and the story seems to be true—crying “I will make you a lane,” embraced in his arms as many as he could of the spears, buried them in his breast, and bore them with him to earth. His fellows poured over his dead body into the Austrian ranks. The defeat of the Austrians was as complete as at Morgarten. The tale of the slain included 656 counts, lords and knights, so that the splendour of the princely court was dimmed for many years, and it was said in the land: “*God hath sat in justice upon the wanton pride of the nobles.*”

Two years later, in 1388, the men of Glarus repeated at *Näfels* the tactics of Morgarten, with no less success than had then attended the Switzers, and the hopes of Austrian dominion over the sturdy mountaineers were finally shattered. When next they met in arms, the Swiss were the aggressors.

In course of time the *eight ancient places* became *the thirteen ancient places*. Freiburg and Solothurn acceded to the League in 1481, and Basle, Schaffhausen and Appenzell in 1513. The list thus formed remained unchanged until the time of the French Revolution, and not until 1814 was the Confederacy completed by the addition of the last States, after a stormy career, athwart civil war more than once, and more than once skirting disruption. But the purpose of the present narrative is already fulfilled, and those whom we may have been so fortunate as to inspire with an interest in Swiss history on its own account must turn for the gratification of that interest to the pages of the professed historian.

II

TRANSLATIONS FROM TSCHUDI'S CHRONICLES OF
SWITZERLAND

*The Oppression of the Woodsteads under
King Albrecht*

ANNO DOMINI 1304, when the Woodsteads of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden were sorely

galled that bailiffs of the Archdukes of Austria in Lucerne or in Rotenburg should exercise the Blood-ban¹ in their lands, as they now had done for a space of three years—fearing lest this innovation might beget a claim that they were vassals of Austria, inasmuch as the aforesaid bailiffs, on the occasion of certain courts of Bloodguilt, had spoken as if they held these courts in the name of the Princes of Austria—the aforementioned Woodsteads were accordingly moved to send a second time in all solemnity their envoys to King Albrecht, entreating his Royal Grace to depute to them an Imperial Sheriff, who should exercise the Blood-ban in his, the King's name, and in the name of the Roman Empire, as was the custom from of old, and likewise humbly entreating his Royal Majesty to vouchsafe to protect them in their imperial and royal liberties and ancient traditions, the confirmation of which they would no more urge, inasmuch as hitherto they had ever urged it in vain.

When now this petition was made, the King was wroth, since he saw that neither by prayers, by mildness, by threats nor by practices had he made them subject to his sons the princes of Austria, nor could he sunder them one from another. He bid the envoys get them home, “for,” said he, “since it must needs be thus, and ye

¹ Jurisdiction with the right of life and death.

will have it so, We will give you imperial sheriffs, and set them in your land, whose commands ye shall in all things obey in Our stead, and if so be ye do not so, We will visit it upon your bodies and your goods, and ye shall then have forfeited all your liberties.”

and appoints resident Land-graves in violation of their ancient rights. Accordingly the King sent them shortly afterwards two Landgraves¹ in the name of the Empire, whom he commanded to fix their abode in their lands, which had never been the custom hitherto, for formerly these three lands had had only one Imperial Landgrave in common between them, who was not domiciled amongst them, but many a year came hardly once amongst them, when one or other of the lands summoned him in judicial affairs. The Landgrave had always in each several land one of the men of that land, gentle or common, one that was not a thrall, and that abode there, whom he appointed to be in his stead, and often authorised him to exercise the Blood-ban. The Landgrave, too, was always an earl or a baron. But now King Albrecht brought in an innovation, and deputed to them two resident Landgraves. The one, Gessler by name, was a knight; he was to rule Uri and Schwyz. This Gessler's was the castle of Küssnacht on Lake Lucerne, where he had his seat. This Landgrave Gessler established himself in Uri in the Tower of Altorf, which belonged to the stewards of Altorf. . . .

¹ See note to page 8.

To Unterwalden he sent as Landgrave *Beringer von Landenberg* to rule Unterwalden, Beringer von Landenberg, a nobleman from Thurgau. Him he set in the Castle of Sarnen, above the wood, which lies over against the village of Sarnen. . . .

The King also commanded the afore-mentioned Landgrave von Landenberg to appoint a deputy to the castle of Rossberg, below the Wood. This fortress had passed by succession upon the death of the last knight of Rossberg to his uncle, the knight of Waltersberg, who also had his dwelling below the wood. Him King Albrecht constrained to sell the fortress to him. He of Landenberg accordingly set over this fortress of Rossberg a noble youth who also abode below the Wood, von *a renegade from his country.* Wolfenschiessen by name, a young, wanton, overbearing man, who had attached himself to the reigning House against the will of his brothers, that had their seat in the fortress of Wolfenschiessen, and of others, his friends.

The strongholds of Sarnen and Rossberg were well garrisoned with men-at-arms, and to both the Landgraves, *The strongholds are garrisoned,* Gessler and Landenberg, many armed retainers were assigned by the king, the costs of whose keep and pay all fell upon the Woodsteads. The king commanded these Landgraves to proceed with the utmost severity against all that should incur pun-

ishment, however trifling might be the cause, to show no grace and to spare no man. These Landgraves were *and in* two fierce, rude, and pitiless men ; *pursuance* that the king well knew, and *of the* therefore it was that he had sent *King's* them thither. They soon began to *instructions* bear honest folk hard, and sharply to use with them all manner of underhandedness and ferocity, such as *the Land-* they had not before been accustomed *graves* to. Also they often carried off *exercise* harmless peasants from the Wood- *great* steads to prison in the stronghold of *harshness* Küssnacht, or to Lucerne, or to Zug in the land of the Archdukes, *and oppress* for petty causes, and chastised *the people* them there with long imprisonment, which *with taxes* had never been done by any king or heard of from of old. At the *which they* markets, too, in Lucerne and Zug, *must needs* in the Archdukes' land, whither *bear by* they went to furnish their needs, *reason of* they were burdened with manifold *the King's* new imposts, in tolls, taxes and *might,* other demands. . . . All this the good folk *being* must perforce suffer and bear with *compassed* for a long time, for the king was so *about with* puissant and so mighty that they *his lands ;* might not venture to withstand him ; moreover he and his sons had *yet are* wholly compassed them about with *cheered by* the lands in their possession, *the hope* wherefore they must of need bear themselves humbly and sub-

that the King may shortly die and the Empire haply depart from the Princes of Austria.

missively until a fitting occasion. Their chiefest hope was that God would not brook for ever the insolence of this King, but would shortly help him out of the world, and that then a following king would protect them, and then the Princes of Austria would no longer be so mighty, when the Empire was departed from out of their hands.

* *The Woodsteads' fruitless Appeal*

The Woodsteads again send envoys to King Albrecht to complain of the harsh rule of the Landgraves.

In the aforementioned year, 1305, the three lands of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden sent their honourable envoys to King Albrecht, wishing to complain of the stern cruelty and harshness the which his Landgraves Gessler and the Landenberger used with them, and to entreat his Royal Highness graciously to put an end to it, and to protect them in their liberties and ancient traditions. But the King would not grant them a hearing. He let them, however, come before his Councillors. To them the envoys related the cruelty of the Landgraves, how for petty causes, and often without cause or honest lawful proof, in defiance of their ancient traditions and liberties, they bare their fellow-countrymen hard, imprisoned them, set them in the stocks, levied money from them, likewise carried them at times out of their lands, and

He puts them off to his Council,

often let them wellnigh rot and perish in dungeons; likewise that they burdened them with new unwonted taxes and imposts, for the keep and pay of their men-at-arms and retainers (of whom the number was great), which hitherto had never been heard of or used amongst them; they were also oppressed with manifold innovations and burdens at the markets of Lucerne and Zug, and manifold outrage and vexations were put upon them there, which was all highly grievous to them, and tended to their oppression and undoing as free peoples of the Empire; most humbly entreating the Royal Councillors that they would move his Royal Majesty to grace, and obtain of him that he would put an end to this oppression of the Landgraves, and like his ancestors, Emperors and Kings, would graciously vouchsafe to them that they should be disburthened of these innovations, and should abide by their liberties as members of the Empire.

The Royal Councillors, after they had reflected, made answer that they (the three lands) should bethink them that they themselves had procured for themselves this displeasure and an ungracious king, in that they would not do as those of Lucerne, Glarus and others had done, and if they themselves hereafter did so, the king and his sons, the Archdukes of Austria, would without doubt vouch-

*before
whom they
recount
their
grievances,*

*and entreat
the Council
to intercede
with His
Majesty*

*to grant
them re-
dress.*

*The Coun-
cillors
answer :*

*the Wood-
steads have
themselves
to blame*

safe to them all grace; let them turn
and hold again unto their homes; the King
the remedy was now burdened with many
in their affairs, they would lay before
own hands. him their petition upon a fitting
 occasion.

The Land- Hereupon they must needs take
graves' their leave without any other
rule grows answer, and when they came
more op- home, things were worse than
pressive. before, since the Landgraves began
 to rage more furiously.

Wolfenschiessen and Baumgarten

In this year (1306), at the beginning of
 autumn, he of Wolfenschiessen, the King's
Von Wolf- bailiff in the stronghold of Rossberg,
enschiessen at Unterwalden, below the Kern-
has evil wald, rode to Engelberg to the
designs Abbey, and as he rode forth again
upon the on the morrow, he found the wife of
wife of an honest peasant, one Conrad von
Conrad Baumgarten (who dwelt at Alzellen),
von Baum- working in a meadow; for Alzellen
garten lies below the wood on the high road
 from Stanz to Engelberg, not far
 from the village of Wolfenschiessen, upon a
 height. The woman was passing fair, and the
 bailiff was inflamed by her beauty to evil lusts.
 He asks the woman where her husband was.
 The woman answers: he is gone abroad and is
 not at home. He asks her again when he will
 return home. The woman had no suspicion
 that he designed wrong to her person, nor
 thought him concerned about her; but she

feared her husband might have trespassed in some matter, and that the bailiff was minded to punish him, seeing that he questioned her so narrowly where he was, for she knew his cruel mind, and made answer, she deemed he would remain abroad several days, she knew not how long (but she knew well that he was in the wood, and would return home at midday). When the bailiff heard that, he spake to the woman: Woman, I will turn in unto your house with you, I have to speak with you. The woman was alarmed, dared not say him nay, went with him into her house. Thereupon he bid her make ready for him a bath of water, for he was sweaty and weary from his journey. Thereupon the woman began to forebode nothing good, longed in her heart after her husband, that he might soon return from the wood, and made the bath ready full loth. When now the bath was ready, he began to open his evil purpose to the woman, took upon him to urge her to bathe with him. The woman was alarmed and filled with dread, for she perceived that the bailiff was minded to use violence with her; she prayed God in her heart to shield her honour, and to protect her from shame. Thereupon she hit upon a cunning contrivance, gave the bailiff friendly words, as were she willing to do his pleasure, bid him send away the servants (of whom he had two with him), for she would not bathe

who, thinking her husband threatened

falsely says he is from home,

but becoming aware of the Burgrave's purpose,

by a cunning contrivance

with him if the servants were in the house. Thereupon the bailiff bade the servants go forth, the woman bade the bailiff sit him in the bath ;
escapes, meanwhile she would quickly put off her clothes in her chamber and come to him in the bath. This the bailiff did. Meanwhile the woman stole quietly forth by the back door of the house, meaning to flee away. At this moment her husband came towards her from the wood ; to him she complained with
and com- weeping and hushed words how the
plains to tyrant would have used her, and how
her hus- that he was sitting in the bath. The
band, honest fellow said : Praised be God, my chaste housewife, that He hath preserved thee, that thou hast saved thine honour ; I will so bless the bath for him that he shall bear him thus with no other woman, for better is it I should hazard my life, than that thou, my dear wife, shouldst be dishonoured.
who slays Therewith he went quickly into the
the Bur- house, and smote the bailiff upon the
grave first stroke. Straightway he fled to Uri, where he held him in hiding, although there was no great search made for him, by reason of the shameful deed that the bailiff had thought to do.
and takes
to flight.

*King Albrecht and Archduke John of
Austria*

At that time when Archduke John of Austria (the son of the deceased Archduke Rudolph,

who had died Anno Domini 1290, and had been the brother of King Albrecht) *The Archduke John of Austria, the nephew and ward of King Albrecht,* was now in the nineteenth year of his age, and saw that the King his cousin,¹ who was to be his guardian and trustee until he came of age, was gradually giving over to his sons many lordships to rule themselves, divers of whom, in the matter of age, were younger than he, whilst to him he had hitherto given none of his paternal and maternal hereditary lands into his hands that he might rule them,—on this account he sent divers of his counsellors to the King his cousin, with the petition that he should likewise allow him to rule himself some portion of his inherited properties and lordships, for he deemed it a slight upon him that the King allowed his sons to rule, but to him no portion of his own hereditary estates should be entrusted to rule. The King made answer to the counsellors of the Archduke John, that he was still at this time the rightful guardian and steward of his cousin, to rule over his body, his goods, his people and his land; when the fitting time of his age should come to rule, then he would do what it behoved him to do. Archduke John was ill content with this answer; he deemed that if it were fitting time for the King's sons to rule (divers of whom were younger than he), it should likewise be fitting

¹ i.e. his uncle.

for him ; and caused his counsellors to bring this
until, the request time and again before the
King wax- King who abode always by his first
ing wroth, answer, and afterwards waxed so
 they would no more mention the matter to him
they will no and refused Archduke John when he
more do so. begged them again to do so, for
 the king held them in suspicion, that
 they had egged him on.

Landenberg and Melchthal

Anno Domini 1307 there was a worthy
Heinrich yeoman in Unterwalden, above the
von Kernwald, by name Heinrich von
Melchthal, Melchthal, and he dwelt in the
 valley of that name,¹ a wise, prudent,
an opponent honourable, well-to-do man, held in
of the Aus- high esteem by the yeomen, and
trian policy, likewise always urging that they
 should hold by the liberties of the
incurs on land, and not let themselves be
that severed from the Roman Empire,
account the wherefore Beringer von Landen-
hatred of berg, the Landgrave over the whole
Landen- of Unterwalden, cherished enmity and
berg. spite against him. This Melchthal
 had goodly oxen, and for a petty
His son reason, because his son Arnold von
Arnold, Melchthal was said to have tres-
being un- passed in some matter, and to have
justly fined incurred punishment (the which
 even were it so, it would not rightfully have
¹ *i.e.* in Melchthal.

brought upon him a fine of five shillings) the Landgrave sends his servant to take the goodliest pair of oxen for a fine, and if the old Heinrich von Melchthal sought to gainsay it, he should tell him it was the Landgrave's opinion that the peasants should draw the plough themselves, and should therewith take the oxen and bring them to him. The servant did as his lord bid him. The worthy man brooked it not lightly that he should be violently reft of his own, and said his son had not deserved that, and if the Landgrave had any claim upon him, he should lawfully convict him, and then punish him. But the servant would have the oxen, as he had been charged. And as he unyoked them, the yeoman's son Arnold (who was still a young man) waxed wroth, and smote the servant so smartly upon the hand with a stave, that straightway one of his fingers brake, and he fled incontinent out of the land to Uri, where he lay a long time in hiding with a kinsman, in the same land where Conrad von Baumgarten of Alzellen lurked in secret ward. The servant made much ado about the stroke, complained of it to his lord the Landgrave; he in a towering anger bid send the lad's old father out of Melchthal, and gave orders to arrest the lad. But as the lad was not found, for he was out of the land, the father came. The Landgrave fell upon the old man with rough words, and required him to set his son Arnold straightway into his hands. The worthy man knew not yet himself whither the

*and
taunted by
the Land-
grave,*

*smites the
servant of
the latter,*

*and takes
to flight.*

son was away, and could well perceive that were he present, his life was at stake; he made answer that of a truth he knew not whither he was away, for he had straightway run out of the house, and had not showed him whither he would go. Thereupon the Landgrave bid take

The Landgrave causes the father's eyes to be put out,

the father (who was an honourable man, and stricken in years) and gouge out both his eyes, for the fellow had hotly asserted that he had said he was wrongly taking from him what was his. And none the less he took the oxen from him too, and he had to make heavy requital to the servant for the maiming of his finger.

From this unseemly tyrannical act the folk of the country conceived a great discontent. And when Arnold, the son, learned how his innocent father had fared, he secretly complained of it to trusty folk at Uri, and hoped to avenge the outrage done to his father. The country folk urged upon the Landgrave that it was grievous to them that he should take such stern measures with their fellows.

The Landgrave made answer: It lay not with him; the King, whose servant he was, would have it so, and had commanded him so to do.

Keep-Uri

At the same time did Gessler, the Landgrave at Uri and Schwyz, grind down the people there, gentle and simple, no less than he of Landen-

berg those of Unterwalden, and did bear them hard, and set himself to build a stronghold at Uri, that he and other Landgraves after him might dwell there the more securely, in the event of risings taking place, and that the country might perforce remain in greater fear and obedience. Accordingly he caused stone, lime, sand, and timber to be brought together upon a rising ground, called Solaturn, situate near Altorf the chief place, began to take in hand the building, and when he was asked how the stronghold would be called, he said its name should be: "Force Uri under the Yoke."¹ This sorely vexed the noble landowners and the common peasants in Uri, and this building was a great thorn in their eyes. When now they were greatly discontented by reason of this building, and he was aware of it, he waxed fiercely wroth with them, and threatened to make them so pliant and tame that a man might twist them round his finger.

The Hat of Austria

And on St James' Day² he caused to be set up at Altorf, on the place by the lime-trees, where all must pass, a pole, and a hat to be set upon it, and he caused it to be proclaimed to all that dwelt in the land, that each that passed should on pain of forfeiture of

¹ So Düntzer interprets "under die Stägen."

² July 25th.

his goods and of bodily punishment, do reverence and obeisance to the hat, bowing and uncovering, as were the king present in person, or he himself in his stead, and he had a watchman and warder, sitting there continually by daytime, to look out and denounce those who should set the command at naught. He weened he should earn for himself great renown, if he might bring this active, brave, and well-famed people—that hitherto had stood in high esteem with emperors, kings, princes and lords, and had never before allowed any man to constrain them—into the most abject submission. This great arrogance galled the country folk more sorely than the building of the castle, yet dared they not set themselves against it, by reason of the manifest great displeasure of the king, and his puissant might, with whom likewise they might not hope to find any favour.

Gessler and Stauffacher. The Inception of the League

In the same days it fell out that the Landgrave Gessler (being minded to journey from Uri to his castle at Küssnacht) rode through the country to Schwyz, over which he was also Landgrave. Now there dwelt at Steinen in Schwyz, a wise and honourable man, of an ancient arm-bearing (*i.e.* noble) stock, Werner von Stauffach by name, the son of the deceased Rudolf von Stauffach, that had been sometime Landreeve of Schwyz. This

*passes at
Steinen the
newly-
built house
of Werner
von Stauff-
acher,*

Werner had built at Steinen, on this side of the bridge, a fair new house. When now the Landgrave Gessler came to this house, and Stauffacher, who stood before the house, received him courteously and welcomed him as his lord, the Landgrave asked him, whose was the house? (which indeed he knew well enough, for he had haply uttered to others the threat that he would take the house from him). Stauffacher was well aware that he asked him in no good part, for well he knew that he bare him a grudge, for that he ever wrought to the end that they should not yield themselves to the princes of Austria, but should hold by the Roman Empire and their ancient liberties. For this Stauffacher had a great following and was held in high esteem by his fellow countrymen. Accordingly he made answer to the Landgrave: "Sir, the house is my lord the King's, and yours, and my fief." The Landgrave said: "I am Regent in the land, in the place of my lord the King, I will not have peasants build houses without my sanction, neither will I have ye live so free, as were ye lords yourselves. I will take upon myself to stay ye from it," and therewith rode upon his way. This saying weighed grievously upon Stauffacher, and he took it to heart. Now he was a wise and prudent man, had also a wise and clever wife, who perceived that he was

*an
opponent
of the
Austrian
policy,*

*and utters
threats
against the
peasants.*

*Stauff-
acher's
wife,*

sad, and that something lay heavily upon him, and he did not open it to her. Now she was fain to know what ailed him, and brought it up so often that he showed her what manner of speech the Landgrave had held with him, and how that he promised himself nothing else than that he would in the meanwhile take from him house, home, goods and chattels.

perceiving his sadness, When she heard this, she said: "My dear husband, thou knowest that many worthy landmen in our land complain of the Landgrave's tyranny, so doubt not but that likewise in Uri and Unterwalden this tyrannical yoke weighs heavily upon many honest country folk, as indeed we hear daily that they lament their sore distress; therefore it were well and needful that divers of ye that dare trust each other should secretly take counsel and bethink yourselves how ye may be rid of this overweening violence, and pledge yourselves to stand by one another and to shield one another in justice. So would God without doubt not forsake you, and would help you to set up a dam against this injustice, as we call upon Him from our hearts to do." Thereupon she asked him if he had particular acquaintance with anyone in the lands of Uri and Unterwalden, in whom he might have confidence, open himself of his distress, and have speech with them upon these things. He made answer: "Aye; I know there great gentlefolk that are

learns the cause thereof,

bids him take counsel with friends in Uri and Unterwalden, to league themselves together.

of my peculiar privity, whom I well may trust.”

Then Stauffacher thought within himself, the woman's counsel might not be amiss, followed it, betook him to Uri, abode there quietly for some days, to hear how the common folk were minded. There he heard from many trusty men of honour grievous complaint and discontent against the Landgrave, by reason of the building of the stronghold, which he purposed to call “Force,” and in particular by reason of the hat, to which they must do obeisance, and he perceived that all the people of the land, gentle and simple, were discontented and hostile to the Landgrave, yet dared not let it openly be seen, nor undertake anything against him in deed, for none knew what backing and support he should have of another in case of need, inasmuch as for that very reason they did not secretly sound one another, and the King's overawing might and the heavy displeasure he bore them, filled them with great apprehension. Now Stauffacher was overjoyed that he perceived there the great discontent against the Landgrave; he thought the thing would be the more easily done, yet for this time he confided his solicitude only to a well-known and prudent man of honour of Uri, one Walter Fürst, what the Landgrave had reproached him with in the matter of the house; and likewise told him how he had been moved by his wife's counsel to ease his bosom to him as his confidant, and take

Stauffacher,
repairing
to Uri,

and finding
the people
discon-
tented,

confides in
Walter
Fürst,

counsel with him, whether it were not well and needful to set themselves against such tyrannical violence, and privily to band themselves together, and to win helpers for their cause. The

who promises to join the League himself, countryman of Uri praised the woman's counsel, and begged, for his part, to contribute to the execution of this plan, and informed him of the fellow of Unterwalden, Arnold von Melchthal, that had

broken the finger of the Landgrave of Unterwalden's servant, how that he still abode

and suggests that amongst them in Uri, but often betook him privily to his own folk at Unterwalden, and that he was a

Arnold von Melchthal be likewise drawn in, worthy and prudent man, although still young, had also a great kinship in his land, and was well to be trusted; for he would be of peculiarly

great service in this matter by reason of his shrewdness.

Accordingly he was summoned, and so these three men, Walter Fürst of Uri, Werner von Stauffacher of Schwyz, and Arnold von Melchthal of Unterwalden, were at one in the matter, that they would take God to help, and venture to take this matter upon themselves, whereof

and the three bind themselves by oath they swore an oath together to God and His Saints, and the following conditions were agreed upon among them: To wit, that each man of them would, in his own country,

secretly solicit help and support from amongst his own kinsfolk and other trusty people, would draw them to himself and bring them over to

their league and sworn vow, to play their part
to recruit in the recovery of their ancient
for the freedom, and to expel the tyranni-
League, cal Landgraves and wanton sway, to
 shield one another in right and
and to stake justice, and to stake body and
body and blood in the cause. But that none
blood in the the less each land should do due
cause of obeisance to the Holy Roman
freedom, Empire, likewise each man his in-
 dividual duty, whereto he was bound;
yet so that be it to abbeyes, lords, gentle or simple,
they will and to other dwellers in or out of
refuse to the land, he should fulfil the duty
none his and service that was due to them,
rightful in so far as these should not under-
service. take to constrain them from their
 liberties, and contrary to right.

This was opened to every one before he entered the League, for they did not desire to deprive any one, churchman or layman, of aught that belonged to him by right and usage, but only to protect themselves from evil violence, and to maintain their ancient liberties.

It was further agreed upon that if aught befell whereby it should be necessary
If need that they had speech together,
were, that then they three should sum-
 mon one another, and should come
they would together by night before the My-
meet in thenstein, which stood out into
secret at the the lake, below Seelisberg, at a
Rütli, place known as the Rütli,¹ and
 if God vouchsafed to them the grace that

¹ *i.e.* the clearing.

their company should grow, that then each
and bring of them should bring with him
others with to the aforesaid Rütli two, three,
them or more prudent and cautious men
thither. that had also taken the oath of
 the League.

It was further agreed that they should keep
The League this matter secret upon their oath
should be until such time as they might resolve
kept secret, to make public their League in
 common in all three Woodsteads
 at once, and that, further, no man and no land
and no one should begin or undertake aught on
land act its own account without the unani-
without mous will and counsel of the
the others leaguers of all the three lands, but
 that they should bear with all that
 should befall them until they had, with God's
 help, well strengthened themselves, and taken
till all were common counsel together when, how,
ready for and at what time, they would take
common the matter in hand in all three lands
action. at once and on one day, lest by the
 beginning of particular people or of
 a single land the other lands should be prejudiced.

In this wise was the aforementioned
The League League first made and sworn in the
being thus land of Uri, by these three good men
sworn and true, wherefrom the confederacy
 arose, and the country of Helvetia
and joined (now called Switzerland), was
likewise by brought back again to its primeval
Baum- estate and liberty. And Stauffacher
garten, journeyed quickly home again to
 Schwyz, and Erni von Melchthal, with Conrad

von Baumgarten from Alzellen (who also swore to the League at that same time), repaired together secretly to Unterwalden; there the one wrought above the Wood, the other below the Wood, and exerted themselves each in his own land so much as he might, and this all befell in autumn.

The Attitude of the Swiss Nobility

The nobility of Uri, namely, the Barons of Attinghausen, of Schweinsberg, of Utzing, together with the Esquires of Silinen, of Seedorf, of Moss, of Springen, the Stewards of Oetschfelden, of Bürglen, and others; further, the Esquires in Unterwalden, those of Rudenz, of Hunweil, the Stewards of Sachslen, of Sarnen, of Stans . . . of Winkelried . . . of Wolfenschiessen (with the single exception of that Wolfenschiessen that was bailiff of Rossberg, he that was slain at Alzellen), and others, were even as discontented by reason of the rule and the Landgraves' tyranny as the other landsfolk. They too were hated in like measure by the king and the Landgraves, for that they took sides with the landsfolk, and neither would they submit to the dominion of Austria, but were bent on holding to the Roman Empire, and the liberties of the land, as free people, like their fathers. The landsfolk and they were fully at one; if any of the landsfolk owed

the confederates recruit members each in his own land.

The Swiss nobility share in the general discontent

and are equally hated by Austria.

The good relations between them and the people

them service, it was duly performed, and nothing bated of their dignity and rights. They also in no wise oppressed the landsfolk, but did them

are vexatious to the Austrian party, much kindness, and were faithful and gracious to the landsfolk. This vexed the King and his sons, the Archdukes of Austria, and likewise the Landgraves sorely, for they thought

surely they should have been to be moved rather than others to submit to the dominion of Austria, as many other counts, lords and esquires in the upper lands had done, and should rather attach themselves to a princely hero than to the peasants, taking them to be their peers.

Wherefore the Landgraves had oppressed them *who oppress them* much and had infringed their rights, especially in the matter of the Imperial fiefs which they held, and wherewith they were enfeoffed as hereditary fiefs; these the Landgraves set themselves to withdraw from them into the hands of the King.

. . . They were likewise slighted and scorned *and jeer at them as peasant-nobility.* by the rulers, and it was cast up to them that they were peasant-nobility, and belonged to the peasant-guild, and there was done them great despite, so that Sir Werner, Thane

The Thane of Attinghausen opens himself to Stauffacher of Attinghausen, at that time Landgrave of Uri, often spake openly to the landsfolk, that they might not long brook the overbearing violence. He complained of it likewise to Stauffacher, when he saw him at Uri, for they were well known to each other, and in particular he complained

to him of the wantonness of the hanging-up of the hat, to which they were bidden to do obeisance. Stauffacher did not yet venture to make disclosure to him of the secret League, but he foresaw that Walter Fürst would do so, if it seemed well to him, as likewise befell. The Esquire of Rudenz above the Kernwald was the son of Stauffacher's sister; with him also he did not yet touch upon the matter until some time was passed, for they went secretly and silently to work.

King Albrecht and Archduke John

At this time Archduke John of Austria, being then in the twentieth year of his age, demanded again of the Roman King, Albrecht, his cousin, that he should give into his hands his paternal and maternal hereditary lands (the which as his guardian he still withheld from him), to rule himself, or at least a part of them, and he himself had speech of the King in the matter, for his counsellors, whom he besought so to do, would no more do it, inasmuch as the King formerly always took it in ill part.

Archduke John repeats his demand in person,

whereto the King returns a contemptuous answer

And the King made answer to him: Cousin, why are ye so greedy to rule, ye are still too young! Rode therewith (for they were riding over the fields), to a bush, brake therefrom a leafy branch, made a garland therewith, and set it upon the head of Archduke John, and said: That should joy

thee more at this time than to rule land and
which so liegemen. This speech stung the
rankles in young Archduke to the very heart,
his heart and it grieved him that the King
 over the lands wherein was *his* inheritance.
that he That vexed him sorely, and he
meditates made complaint thereof, with tears,
revenge. to his counsellors, and besought
 would help him to avenge the insult upon
 the King.

Albrecht This King Albrecht was a morose
means to and taciturn man, and many thought
withhold he was minded to withdraw from
his estates, the young Archduke his hereditary
and make domains, and to confer them upon
him a his own children (of whom he had
bishop. many) and to make him belike a
 bishop or an archbishop.

The Folk-moots on the Rütli

At this time the three worthy leaguers,
 Walter Fürst of Uri, Werner von Stauffach of
The League Schwyz, and Melchthal of Unter-
grows. walden were not tardy in recruiting,
 and bestirred themselves to such
 effect that the greater part of the people secretly
 joined the League and sware the oath in all three
 lands, and in Uri and Unterwalden the nobles
 too. The matter was only mentioned to those
 whom they thought they could trust, and they
 went quietly to work. They held a Diet fre-
 quently by night in the aforementioned Rütli,

beside the Mythenstein on Lake Uri, where some twenty or thirty came together; they forwarded and urged on the business most earnestly, for they were afraid that if they delayed long, it might break out before they had taken any common counsel, and do them great detriment; wherefore a final day was again appointed to meet at the Rütli, and each of the aforementioned three confederates was to bring with him nine or ten men the wisest and most prudent in counsel, to take final counsel and resolve at what time they should set hand to the matter. This nocturnal Diet was held on the Wednesday before Martinmas.¹

Now the men of Uri and of Schwyz had fain forwarded the matter straightway, but this did not suit the men of Unterwalden, by reason of the two strong fastnesses in their land, Sarnen and Rossberg, for they feared that these fastnesses were not lightly to be carried in such haste, and should they attempt to carry them by leaguer, it could only be done with great toil and at a great price, and haply the King would seek to raise the leaguer with armed force; whereupon they must defend the country, and likewise maintain themselves before the fastnesses within the country, for should the fastnesses not be carried and razed to the ground, they would never be at peace from them. But

*New
Year's
Day 1308
fixed for
the rising.*

¹ November 11th, in 1307 a Saturday.

if they were minded to defer the matter till New Year's Day of the following year 1308, which after all was only a matter of eight weeks, it was then their custom to bring a Happy New Year (*i.e. New Year's Gifts*) to the Landgrave

The castles to be overthrown, in Castle Sarnen; then they would possess themselves of this stronghold, and take measures that Castle Rossberg should likewise be overcome on

the same day, and on that same day they would rise in all the three Woodsteads, and expel at one and the same time the tyrannical Landgraves

the Landgraves expelled, and the servants of the domination. This plan commended itself to all, and it was accordingly resolved that they would secretly abide by this

counsel and adopt no other, save in case of extremity, and every man should, in the meanwhile, suffer what it was in any way possible to suffer, and bear himself quietly, giving no cause for suspicion. It was furthermore agreed that when the time came they would do no hurt

but without bloodshed if might be. either to the Landgraves or to their troopers, men-at-arms or retainers, in their lives, but would send them out of the land with their belongings,

save and excepting if any should stand upon his defence with violence; this they did to the end that the King might have the less ground of complaint that they had murderously made away with his people.

Gessler and Tell

Thereafter, on the Sunday after Othmari,¹ the 18th of the Wintermonth (*November*), there went an honest upright yeoman of Uri, William Tell by name (that was also in secret a member of the League), divers times past the place whereas the hat hung, and did no obeisance to it, as the Landgrave Gessler had commanded; this was shown to the

*Tell,
violating
the mandate
concerning
the hat,*

Landgrave. So on the morrow thereof, on a Monday, he summoned Tell before him, asked him haughtily wherefore he was not obedient to his commands, and had done no obeisance to the hat, thereby failing in respect likewise to the King. Tell made answer: Dear my lord, it was an oversight and no want of respect; I pray you pardon me; were I shrewd, I were not called the Tell;² I crave your grace, it shall not happen again. Now Tell was a good crossbowman that scarce had his master, and had fair children that were dear to him.

Them the Landgrave bade bring, and said: Tell, which amongst thy children is dearest to thee? Tell answered: My lord, they are all like dear to me. Then spake the

Landgrave: Come then, Tell, thou art as I hear an archer of renown; now shalt thou

¹ The day of the Abbot Othmar, the 16th November. In 1307 this fell on a Thursday, so that the following Sunday was not the 18th but the 19th November.

² *i.e.* the Simple. See note to page 100.

make proof of thine art before me, and shoot an apple from off the head of one of thy children, wherefore have a care that thou hit the apple, for if thou hit it not with the first shot, it shall cost thee thy life. Tell was horror-stricken, implored the Landgrave for God's sake to release him from the shot, for it was unnatural that he should draw bow upon his own child, he would die first. The Landgrave said: That shalt thou do, or thou and the child shall die. Tell saw well that he must needs do it, prayed fervently to God, that He would keep him and his dear child. *Tell secretes a second bolt,* Took his cross-bow, bent it, fitted the bolt, and stuck a second bolt into his jerkin behind, and with his own hand the Landgrave laid the apple on the child's head, who was not more than six years old. *and happily shoots true.* And so Tell shot the apple from off the crown of the child's head, yet so as he did the child no hurt. When now the shot was over the Landgrave marvelled at the masterly shot, praised Tell for his skill, and asked him what that meant, that he had a second bolt sticking in his jerkin behind. But Tell was alarmed, and thought the question boded nothing good, yet had he fain given a harmless turn to the matter, and said: That was even archers' use. *The Landgrave asks him touching the second bolt,* The Landgrave marked well that Tell was shirking his question, and said: *promising him his life,* Come now, Tell, speak the truth cheerily, and have no fear therefor; thou shalt be assured of thy life, for I will

not take the answer thou hast made, I make no doubt it had another meaning. Thereupon said William Tell; Well then, my lord, sithence ye have warranted my life, I will tell you the *whereupon* ground-truth, that my final purpose *Tell speaks* was, had I hit my child, to shoot *out.* you with the second bolt, and verily you I had not missed. When the Landgrave heard that he said: Well then, Tell, I have warranted thy life, that will I keep; but for that I perceive thine evil will towards me, I will have thee brought to a place and there shut up, where thou shalt never more look upon sun or moon, that I may be safe from thee. Bade herewith his servants lay hold of him, and straightway bring him in bonds to Flüelen. He fared likewise with them, and *Tell is* took Tell's shooting-gear—quiver, *brought on* bolts and cross-bow—with him too, *ship-board,* purposing to keep them for himself. Thus the Landgrave with his servants, and Tell in bonds, sate himself in a ship, being minded to sail to Brunnen, and thereafter to bring Tell by land through Schwyz to his castle at Küssnacht, and there in a gloomy tower to let him end his days; Tell's shooting-gear was laid in the ship beside the rudder, upon the after-part or sternage of the ship.

When now they came upon the lake and sailed along the reach as far as Axen, God *and, a* brought it to pass that such a fearful *storm* and violent storm-wind brake forth *rising,* that they weened all they should perish miserably. Now Tell was a stalwart man and greatly skilled upon the water;

and one of the servants said to the Landgrave : Sir, ye see your and our extremity and peril of our lives wherein we stand, and that the steersmen are terror-stricken and not well-versed in sailing ; now Tell is a stalwart man, and can handle a ship well, we ought now to make use of him in extremity. The Landgrave was sore afraid by reason of the stress of weather, and said to Tell : If thou mightest trust thy skill to save us from this peril, I would free thee from thy bonds. Tell made answer : Aye, my Lord, *is unbound,* I trust my skill to help us forth of *to take the* this, God helping. Accordingly he *rudder.* was unbound, stood beside the rudder, and steered skilfully along, yet ever kept a lookout upon the shooting-gear that lay hard by him, and for a vantage to leap forth, and as he came near to a ledge (which has since borne the name of Tell's ledge, and a holy cell hath since been built there), him seemed he might well leap forth in that place and escape ; he cried to the oarsmen to pull with might and main till they were past this ledge, for then they had overcome the worst, and as he came beside the ledge, he thrust the stern with all his might (being indeed a strong man) against the ledge, *He leaps* caught up his shooting-gear, and *ashore,* sprang out upon the ledge, thrust the ship lustily from him, and left them swaying and swinging upon the lake. But Tell sped over the mountains, ever towards the shadow¹ (for no snow had yet fallen) over Morsach through the land of Schwyz, till he came to the rising ground beside the high-road,

¹ *i.e.*, Northwards.

between Arth and Küssnacht, where there is a sunken road, and brushwood above it. Therein he lay hidden, for he knew that the Landgrave would ride past to his castle at Küssnacht. The Landgrave and his retinue came with great peril and labour over the lake to Brunnen, rode thereafter through the land of Schwyz, and as they drew near to the aforementioned sunken road, he heard all manner of designs of the Landgrave against him, but he had his cross-bow bent, and shot the Landgrave through with a bolt, that he fell from his horse, and was straightway dead.

Hereupon Tell ran swiftly back again; it was late and night was falling, and on his way past he told Stauffacher at Steinen the whole affair; how it had fallen; went further upon his way by night to Brunnen whence he was hurriedly conveyed in a small boat to Uri by one that was also secretly in the League. There too he arrived by night, for at that time the nights are at their longest. He lay in hiding, but straightway acquainted Walter Fürst and other of the confederates how that he had shot the Landgrave; this was also speedily made known to the leaguers in Unterwalden. The secret leaguers in Uri, and

The people are indignant at Gessler's inhuman act,

many others in the land that as yet knew nothing of the League took it very much to heart that the Landgrave had dealt so inhumanly with Tell, when he constrained him to shoot the apple from off the child's head and further bore him out of the land a captive; in particular his fellow-leaguers chafed

sorely that they might not give help to Tell nor deliver him, that was in the League with them; they bore it heavily and with great grief; yet

*Yet must
needs blame
Tell for
imperilling
the
common
cause.*

was it also unwelcome to them, that Tell had not been obedient yet this once to the Landgrave's unseemly command in the matter of the hat, until the appointed time of their common undertaking. For it behoved them not to begin anything alone, inasmuch as they and the other fellow-

leaguers in all the three lands had so solemnly pledged themselves that none would begin anything on his own account, without common counsel, lest the other lands be prejudiced thereby, and it should tend to the common disadvantage of them all. Accordingly they must needs let pass this accursed heartless wantonness for that time, that nothing might be undertaken contrary to the accepted covenant, and that the scheme agreed upon for the coming New Year might hold good. Yet a nocturnal Diet was held once

*The
leaguers
agree to
abide by
their first
plan.*

again in the Rütli, to consider whether they would not haply shorten the time before acting. But the former counsel stood, seeing that it was now a matter of only six weeks more, and in the meantime they were to recruit more confederates, and each

man to be patient, remain quiet and begin nothing.

At the place above the sunken road, where William Tell shot the Landgrave, a holy cell hath since been built, that still stands there; the authorities did

*A chapel
was built*

later, nothing in the matter for the time
where the being—forasmuch as the King was
Land- in Lower Austria at the time—
grave fell. awaiting his arrival to appoint a
 new Landgrave.

The Insurrection

Anno Domini 1308, when the New Year's Day of the Circumcision of Christ our Lord was come, the men of Unterwalden that had sworn the League had already bethought them how they should overmaster the strongholds of Sarnen and Rossberg, which were very strong. In Castle Rossberg (situate below the Kernwald, between Stans and Oedweil, upon a high hill) there was a serving-maid; she was the sweetheart of a fellow of Stans, that was likewise in the League; he arranged with her that he would come to her a-wooing by night on New Year's Eve, at midnight, and she should draw him up into the castle upon a rope, by a window-hole that he showed her; the maid was overjoyed at the scheme, for the lad had won her heart; when now the night was come, he secretly took with him a score of the confederates; they stationed themselves in hiding by the castle-wall, that the maid might not see them; the maid bound the cord to a mullion of the window, and let it fall to the ground. *The* The fellow drew himself up thereon
insurgents
surprise
Castle
Rossberg
 into the castle, withdrew with the maid to dally in her chamber for an hour or so; meanwhile came the leaguers one after the other up the

cord, until they were all come into the castle. Speedily they made prisoners the bailiff and four of his retainers together with the household, waiting in the castle, and letting not a soul out by the castle gate till past midday, that no hue and cry should arise until Castle Sarnen was also seized. But straightway when they had taken the castle they sent one of their number secretly to Stans, to make known to certain of their fellow-leaguers that Rossberg was theirs, that they might quickly and secretly acquaint therewith their confederates above the Wood.

Now the Landgrave von Landenberg, who dwelt in Castle Sarnen above the Wood, had violently imposed upon the people the custom that they should bring him on New Year's Day gifts by way of New Year's wishes, the one poultry, a capon, a hare, a kid, a lamb, a calf, or what not, according to the means of each, that they must bring him into the castle; accordingly some fifty of those that were in the League had devised a scheme that thirty of them, well-armed, should hide themselves before day beneath the Castle below the mill in the alderwood, and the remaining twenty should prepare staves and point them, so that a spear-head would go on, and should bear each a spear-head with him in his bosom, and should bring the Happy New Year gifts into the Castle (for no man was permitted to bear any weapon into the Castle), and when they were all in, one should blow a horn upon the hill in front, and thereupon the twenty should speedily thrust the spear-heads upon the staves, and try to keep the

gates open by force, and as soon as those in the alder heard the horn, they should run with all speed to the castle-gate, to the help of their people. Now whilst the twenty were going to the Castle with the gifts, the Landgrave went forth with twain to go to church, for it was morning, about the time when men go to church, and when he saw that they were all unarmed, he had no fear of them; the presents gladdened him, and he bade bear them into the Castle, and went on his way to church.

Shortly after the horn was blown, and the Castle was carried in the aforementioned fashion, the retainers and all the household were taken, all furniture brought forth and the Castle razed to the ground. In like manner was Rossberg also destroyed. And when the Landgrave in church with his retainers was aware of this, they would fain have fled over the mountains, but might not for the snow, wherefore they followed the mountains over Alpnach down to Lucerne; they were indeed seen, but they were allowed to pursue their way without molestation, as had been agreed; the captive men-at-arms and the households of Sarnen and Rossberg were likewise sent unharmed upon their way, and their belongings all sent after them and no hurt was done them in body or goods, save that they must void the land, and so soon as that was done, all the people of the country, gentle and simple, young and old, above and below the Kernwood swore together to help and counsel one another against the tyrannical domination.

At the same time the men of Uri likewise

cleared their land, and destroyed the newly-
The men begun stronghold, the which the
of Uri tyrant Gessler had purposed to call
destroy the "Force Uri under the Yoke," and
Castle swore together in great numbers to
"Force help and protect one another. In
Uri under like manner things fell out likewise in
the Yoke," Schwyz; there Werner von Stauffach
 and the leaguers destroyed Castle
and those Lowerz, in Lake Lowers. It was
of Schwyz neither fortified nor garrisoned, for
Castle it was falling to ruins; it was only
Lowerz. used as a prison, wherein to cast evil-
 doers who were to be put to the
 question and tried for their lives; there they
 took an oath together. This befell all upon one
 day, on New Year's Day, that fell upon a
 Monday, Anno Domini 1308, as had been
 before determined.

The lands On the Sunday thereafter each
covenant land sent to other its honourable
together envoys, and they covenanted together
 for ten years to help and protect one
 another with all the articles as at first Walter Fürst
 of Uri, Werner von Stauffach of Schwyz, and
 Arnold von Melchthal of Unterwalden had sworn.

and King The Roman King, Albrecht, was at that
Albrecht time not in the country, but when he after-
swears to wards returned to the country, and
be avenged. learned how the three Woodsteads
 Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden had
 expelled his Landgraves and servants
 from the country, and pulled down
 his castles over which they had ruled, he thought
 to avenge it upon them with a mighty army.

When now King Albrecht was at Baden in Aargau, and knights and esquires went daily to and from him, there came upon Sunday the 28th day of April a knight that was well-known to the King, on foot; the King asked him what new tidings he brought. The knight said: Sire, else nothing, save that as I would have ridden hither, there encountered me a swarm of hornets, and so sorely stung me, that I must perforce dismount from my horse, and take off his saddle upon my head to shield myself, and had much ado myself to escape them, and straightway the whole swarm fastened upon my horse, and stung and tortured it till it lay dead in the field, so that I was constrained to come the whole way hither afoot. The King marvelled greatly thereat, and spake: Such a thing hath never before been heard of, it bodeth nothing of good.

Murder of King Albrecht

And when now Archduke John of Austria, the King's brother's son, was now twenty years old (for his deceased father, the Archduke Rudolph, departed this life Anno Domini 1290, when he was two years old) and King Albrecht still claimed to be his guardian, ruled all his hereditary estates and would let him have nothing in his hands, Archduke John began to fear that the King was minded to divert his hereditary estates to his own children, inasmuch as he had

*Archduke
John fear-
ing the
King's
designs
upon his
estates,*

so frequently required them of him, and now surely he was at length of an age to rule them himself, when nothing should be withheld from him. And so on the aforementioned

renews his petition, May-day Eve he made request yet again of the King that he would

make over to him his paternal and maternal heritage in lands and liegfolk, what was his due; he desired thenceforth to rule them himself. The King made answer

and being again put off to him: That will come yet all in good time, and other answer

made he him none. This speech and overweening answer stung Arch-

duke John to the quick, and he made complaint of it weeping to his counsellors, Rudolf

Freiherr von Wart, Walter Freiherr von Eschenbach, Rudolf Freiherr von Palm,

Conrad Ritter von Tegerfeld and sundry bosom-friends, and conjured them by the oath

takes counsel of revenge. they had sworn to him, to help him now at length, as they had promised

him the year before, for he was resolved to avenge himself on the King at his next vantage.

On the morrow thereafter, on May-day, being St Philip's and St James' Day, the King rode

On May-day the King from Baden, being minded to journey down to his lady-wife, the Queen

journeys to Rheinfeld, Elizabeth, whom he had left at Rheinfeld, and afterwards to review

his army, which still lay before Fürstenstein, and when he came

to the ferry by Windisch, then Archduke John of Austria, his cousin, and the above-

mentioned four, Wart, Eschenbach, Palm and Tegerfeld, purposely contrived that they should be first ferried over Reusswater with the King; all the rest of the meiny came slowly after. And as the King rode through the young corn over the tilth between Windisch and Brugg, and conversed with Sir Walter, Ritter von Casteln, and thought no evil, his cousin Archduke John, together with his helpers, fell on him, and Archduke John stabbed him in the throat, and said: Thou hound, now will I pay thee back the shame thou hast put upon me, and will see if my paternal heritage may come into mine hands. Sir Walter of Eschenbach clave the King's skull in twain, and Sir Rudolf of Palm ran him through with his sword. The Knight of Casteln was horror-stricken at the unexpected deed, and fled towards Brugg. Thus the King lost his life by reason of his great greed and niggardliness, in his ancestral estate, his birthright that bore his name, in the Earldom of Hapsburg, done to death in and on his own, by his own, in the place and stead where now the high-altar stands in the Abbey of Königsfeld (that was built thereafter), when he had reigned ten years less some weeks; and there chanced to be present as the deed was done a poor common wench, who caught the King in

is parted from his suite at the ferry by a manœuvre of Archduke John,

and struck down by the conspirators

“in and on his own, and by his own,”

breathing his last in arms of a country-wench.

her arms as he fell from his horse and in her lap he passed away. When now Archduke John and the lords his helpers had accomplished this deed, they all fled from the spot, each whither he could. . . .

Archduke John rode over the land by hidden ways through the territory of Zug, and came secretly by night into the Abbey of Einsiedeln, so that none knew him, and he remained some days there in hiding. . . .

When King Albrecht was slain there was everywhere wild confusion, the whole land was affrighted, they feared great turmoils, yet the land remained at peace better than they had weened it would, nay, wellnigh better than before ; yet afterwards, when the King's sons had obtained a decree from the future King Heinrich against the murderers and whosoever should give them asylum, much innocent blood was shed, and all the friends, kinsfolk and fautors of the murderers, that were blameless in the matter, nor had helped by word, deed, or asylum, had to pay the penalty, and forfeited life and goods, for King Albrecht's sons dealt tyrannically with them, and in particular his daughter Agnes, widow relict of the deceased King Andreas of Hungary, who raged bloodily, more than inhumanly, and other than behoves a woman-body. So soon as the King's death was bruited

The whole land is affrighted ; much innocent blood is shed by way of vengeance, especially by the King's daughter, Agnes of Hungary. Every-where guard is kept,

abroad in the land, the cities and strongholds in all the lands were guarded, the gates everywhere were well closed by night and beset with soldiers. The gates of the men of Zürich had stood open for a space of thirty years, so as they were closed neither by day nor by night, though they had haply had foes in the meanwhile, but now they caused them to be shut, that none of those that bare

guilt in the murder might take refuge in their city, and they had to clear and sweep away the rubbish from about them before they could bring them to. When now the Queen Elizabeth had intelligence of the death of her wedded lord the King, she straightway wrote to all cities and towns, that they should be on the watch for the murderers, and take them wherever they might meet them, on pain of death. . . .

The projected war with the Woodsteads is dropped,

and they are courted with fair words,

Whereas, too, the deceased King Albrecht had greatly menaced the three lands, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, and was minded to make war upon them, this war went no further, and they began to give them fair words, for they feared lest they should espouse the cause of Archduke John and the murderers, and take in hand to protect them, and likewise to avenge themselves on the rulers. They were again allowed a cheap market, and the Queen Elizabeth sent

an honourable embassy to them, making plaint of the murderous deed that Archduke John and his helpers had done upon her lord the King, praying that they would give the doers no protection or asylum with them, and would lend their aid that this murder might be avenged upon the murderers; that should never be forgotten by the Queen and her sons in their gratitude.

The representatives of the Woodsteads made unanimous answer: Notwithstanding they had now opportunity to avenge themselves in some measure of the great tyranny and outrage that they had suffered from the King, who had never confirmed their liberty, but had taken in hand to oust them from it and to bring them by his officers into slavish submission, yet were they not so vengeful as in truth had been well deserved of them; but that they should help to avenge the King's death, from whom they had received no kindness, and to pursue the murderers, that had never done them hurt, that behoved them not; yet again moreover they had no mind to charge upon themselves anything of the sort, but with all them that left them in peace, likewise to keep peace. At Lucerne and elsewhere in the Archduke's lands much despite and contumely had been done to their people, the which they did not lightly forget. That was their answer.

Archduke John and the murderers likewise
nor with secretly sued for help and succour
his from the Woodsteads; this was
murderers. denied them; they would not
 charge upon themselves aught of
 this matter.

III

THE TELL-MYTH

When in 1760 a Bernese pastor was so ill-advised as to cast doubt upon the historical existence of the national archer-hero, whom he identified with the hero of a Danish legend, the book which propounded such sacrilegious doctrine was burnt at the hand of the common hangman.

Yet Pastor Freudenberger was right, and all historical research since his day, whether of friend or enemy, has only gone to confirm his view. The wonder is that it needed confirmation. Let the reader judge.

The Danish legend in question runs as follows:—

Toko, one of the retainers of King Harold Bluetooth, had provoked the envy of his fellows by his prowess. One day being at the board he boasted in his cups to his boon-companions of his skill in bowcraft. He could, he said, hit the smallest apple set upon a wand, and that at a great range. There were not wanting amongst his ill-wishers those who were spiteful enough to bear his lightly-uttered boast to the ears of the King. Then the evil-minded tyrant made the father's vaunt turn to the peril of the

son. For in place of the wand he set the archer's most precious pledge, and bade him smite the apple from the child's head at the first shot, or pay with his life the penalty of his idle boast. Toko charged the boy not to wince as the arrow whizzed past lest he should put his marksmanship at fault, and set him with his back towards him that the sight of the arrow might not unnerve him. Then, drawing three arrows from his quiver, he drew the bow and pierced the apple with the first shot. "Why so many arrows," asked the King, "when thou should'st have but one shot?" "To be avenged upon thee," retorted Toko, "should the first swerve from the mark, lest I should suffer who am innocent, and thou that art unjust should'st come off scatheless." The tyranny of Harold waxed with his years. He laid burdensome taxes upon his people, and made men and oxen to be yoke-fellows in the plough. And when the cup of his iniquities was full, the peasants rose against him, and set his son Sweyn on the throne in his stead, the tyrant having been slain in a thicket of the forest by an arrow from Toko's bow.

Harold Bluetooth lived and reigned in the tenth century. The chronicler, Saxo Grammaticus, wrote his *Historia Danica* towards the end of the twelfth century, the story of Tell is placed in the beginning of the fourteenth century. History does indeed repeat itself, but scarcely with such attention to detail.

But the saga of Toko is by no means an isolated parallel to the Tell-myth. The Thidrekssaga, a Scandinavian legend of the thirteenth century, has a story of King Nidung

and the archer Egil which resembles it no less closely. Nidung wishes to test the skill of Egil with the bow, the fame of which has reached his ears. He causes an apple to be set upon the head of Egil's son, a child of three years old, and bids the father shoot once at the mark. Egil chooses three arrows, pierces the apple with the first, and to the King's question as to the purport of the other two he returns the familiar answer.

And these are not the only analogues to the Tell legend, though they are those that tally most nearly with it. In its central *motif* the story occurs again and again amongst the peoples of Teutonic stock.

Thus, in Norwegian tradition, King Olaf the Saint (994-1000), who introduced Christianity into Norway, seeks the conversion of one of his followers, the brave Eindridi Ildbreidt. The two match themselves in divers contests of skill, Eindridi being pledged to accept Christianity in the event of defeat. At length the King challenges Eindridi to shoot at a chessman placed upon his son's head. The boy's eyes are bound, and the napkin held by two men lest he should flinch as the arrow whistles past. The King shoots and hits the mark, but his arrow grazes the child's head, drawing blood. Eindridi, moved by the pleadings of the child's mother, abandons the shot and accepts defeat.

So, too, Hemingr, the son of Aslak, another Norse archer, is challenged to a trial with the bow by Harold, Sigurd's son, the Harold Hardrada of English history. The King

performs sundry feats, which are all capped by the archer. He sets his spear upright in the ground, shoots up into the air, and his arrow falls and stands quivering in the butt-end of the shaft. But Hemingr, likewise, shoots into the air, and his arrow, falling, cleaves the King's arrow at the nock. Thereupon the King aims at a knife planted in an oak tree, and lo! his arrow sits in the haft. But Hemingr's arrow cleaves the haft to the very socket of the blade. The King flushes angrily; he draws the bow till the horn-tips all but kiss, and his arrow pierces a twig upon the tree. But Hemingr takes a greater range, and splits a hazel-nut in twain, so that all were amazed that saw it. Then the King was very wroth, and bade the archer take a nut and set it on the head of his brother Bjorn and shoot thereat from the same range, and, if he missed, his life should be forfeit. Hemingr recoils from the test—the King may rather have his life—but Bjorn heartens him on. "God be my witness," says Hemingr, "I had rather die than that my brother Bjorn should have any hurt of me; the guilt be on the King's head." But the shaft sped true, and the boy was unhurt. And when years later Harold invaded England, and was shot through the throat at the battle of Stamford bridge, it was the bow of Hemingr that sped the fatal shaft.

The version of this story current in the Faroe Islands substitutes Geyti, the son of Aslak, for Hemingr, Harold notes that Geyti has furnished himself with a spare arrow, which leads to the usual question and answer.

And so one might go on reciting the story, as it is told here and there with many variants, till the reader turned away for very weariness. Now the mark is a coin, now the price of the shot is the pardon of a rebel; again, it is the ransom of a captive. Nor must we forget that our Robin Hood is of the kindred of Tell, whilst in the English ballad of Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley, we have a yet nearer parallel. The three are outlaws who have won the King's pardon for their lawless deeds upon the intercession of the Queen, and are now making before the royal pair a display of their marvellous skill in archery. After many wondrous feats, William of Cloudesley proposes a yet severer test:—

“I have a sonne seven yeers old,
Hee is to me full deere;
I will tye him to a stake—
All shall see him that bee here,—

And lay an apple upon his head;
And goe six score paces him froe,
And I myself with a broad arrowe
Shall cleave the apple in towe.”

“Now haste thee,” said the Kinge;
“Bye him that dyed on a tree,
But if thou dost not as thou hast sayd,
Hanged shalt thou bee!

And thou touch his head or gowne
In sight that men may see,
By all the Saints that bee in Heaven,
I shall you hang all three!”

“That I have promised,” said William,
“Thatt I will never forsake:”
And then even before the King
In the earth he drove a stake.

And bound thereto his eldest sonne,
 And bade him stand still thereat,
 And turned the child's face him fro
 Because he should not start.

An apple upon his head he set,
 And then his bow he bent ;
 Six score paces they were meaten ¹
 And thither Cloudeslee went.

Then he drew out a fair broad arrow,—
 His bow was great and long,—
 He set that arrow in his bow
 That was both stiff and strong.

He prayed the people that were there
 That they wold still stand,
 "For he that shooteth for such a wager
 Had need of steedye hand."

Much people prayed for Cloudeslee,
 That his life saved might bee ;
 And when he made him readye to shoote,
 There was many a weeping eye.

Thus Cloudeslye clave the apple in two,
 As many a man might see :
 "Now God forbid," then said the King,
 "That thou sholdst shoote at me !

I give thee eight pence a day,
 And my bow shalt thou bear,
 And over all the north countrye
 I make thee Cheefe Ryder."

The story of the peerless archer is thus seen to be a part of that common stock of myths which the various Teutonic peoples have inherited from their common ancestry. Mythologists have explained it as a personification of the struggle between the heavenly Archer, the Sun, and the grim tyrant Winter, in which the latter is worsted by the unerring shafts of his adversary.

The conclusion thus irresistibly forced upon

¹ *i.e.* Measured.

us of the mythical character of the Tell-legend is fully borne out by the results of historical research. There is no record of Tell's shot, with its train of weighty consequences, until fully a century and a half after the date to which it is assigned. Yet there is no dearth of contemporary, or almost contemporary, chroniclers, who would have hailed so romantic a story as a very treasure-trove had it been current in their day. John of Winterthur, John, Abbot of Victring, Matthew of Nuremberg, know nothing of Tell or Gessler, nothing of the expulsion of the baillies.

John of Winterthur wrote a chronicle which covers the period in question, extending from the time of Frederick II. to 1348, and which is one of our chief sources for the Swiss history of that day. That history he saw in the making, for he tells us how, being then a schoolboy, he was an eye-witness of the flight of Duke Leopold and the remnant of his army from the bloody field of Morgarten. The battle of Morgarten was fought in 1315, seven years after Tschudi's date for the expulsion of the baillies. Abbot John of Victring wrote no later than thirty years after the Battle of Morgarten.

Not only are these authorities silent with regard to the exploits of Tell, but the very name of Tell does not occur in the archives of Uri until the end of the seventeenth century, and the Christian name of Wilhelm is a great rarity. The name of Gessler fails equally in the rolls of the *Landvögte* or Baillies of Uri, and the castle of Küssnacht was demonstrably in other hands from 1296 downwards.

How then came the story to assume its present form?

It is in the "little chronicle of the White Book," preserved in Sarnen, that Tell first makes his appearance, towards the end of the fifteenth century, and this is the source whence the later chroniclers drew, down to Tschudi himself. In the *White Book* we have the two accounts of the liberation of the Woodsteads, one attributing it to Tell, the other to the secret league, but so imperfectly blended that if the story of Tell be cut out altogether, there is no apparent gap in the recital. The reader will observe that this imperfect welding of the two stories has persisted down to Schiller's drama, in which it forms one of the most conspicuous flaws.

The rising of the peasantry is in earlier narratives placed in Schwyz, and this squares better with the historical facts, for Schwyz and Unterwalden were still under the Hapsburgs, whereas, since 1231, there was no intermediary between Uri and the Empire. (Appendix I., p. 209.) But Uri early appears in alliance with the other two, and as an asylum for fugitives therefrom. The historical kernel of the story would seem to have been contributed by Schwyz and Unterwalden, whilst Uri brought to the shaping of the national legend the archer-myth which had been localised there, as each Teutonic people localised it in the country it occupied. Before being taken up into the chronicle, it had existed as a ballad, a form of which dating back to 1477 is still extant.

There was an historical personage of the name

of Hermann Gessler von Brunegg, who died about 1440. Of him it is related that he pawned the castle of Landenberg together with the county of Grüningen to the city of Zürich, thereby falling into strained relations with his feudal lord, Duke Frederick IV. of Tyrol, one of whose retainers he caused to be seized and had his eyes put out. The author of the White Book would seem to have drawn from this source the names of his two Landvögte, together with the atrocity he attributes to one of them. The final seal was set upon the story by the chronicle of Tschudi, who reconciled the inconsistencies of his predecessors, and gave to his narrative, together with the air of veracity, that imprint of the picturesque which assured to it its hold upon the popular fancy. Tschudi's Chronicle, written in the sixteenth century, was not printed till 1734. In the meanwhile it had served as a source whence other writers had drawn, and when it did finally appear, it seemed to corroborate with ancient evidence their narratives which, being based upon it, could not in truth derive from it any further confirmation.

IV

THE GENESIS OF SCHILLER'S TELL

The history of Schiller's first impulse to the dramatisation of the story of Tell and the Swiss confederacy is, by the poet's own showing, the history of a prophecy which brought about its own fulfilment. In 1801, whilst he was still engaged upon the *Maid of Orleans*, public

curiosity in Jena already concerned itself with his choice of a subject for his next play. The rumour spread—possibly set afloat by the fact that he had borrowed from the library the first two volumes of Johannes Müller's recently published *History of Switzerland*—that his subject was to be the Swiss hero, Tell. In March 1802 he writes to his publisher Cotta:—

If you can get me an accurate detailed map of Lake Lucerne and the surrounding cantons, pray have the kindness to bring it with you. It has so often been my fate to hear the false rumour that I am writing a *William Tell* that my attention has at length been drawn to this subject, and I have studied Tschudi's *Chronicon Helveticum*. This has proved so attractive to me that I am now thinking in good earnest of working up the subject into a play, and that shall be a play that shall do me honour. But not a word of the matter to any one, for I grow out of humour with my works when I hear them too much talked of.

The subject was not indeed new to him. Goethe—the two great poets had already formed that bond of closest friendship which proved of such import for the literary labours of each—Goethe had written to him from Switzerland in October 1797, communicating his conviction that the story of Tell would lend itself admirably to epic treatment. The plan of such an epic Goethe had himself sketched out, and discussed with Schiller on the occasion of a visit to Jena in 1798. Indeed, Goethe himself, at a much later date, asserted that he had willingly and formally made over to Schiller his rights in the subject—which had lost its charm for him—when Schiller announced to him his plan of a Tell-drama. The accuracy of Goethe's memory has

been called in question, but, be that as it may, there can be no doubt that Schiller's execution of his scheme was influenced by Goethe's conception, and profited by his communications upon the country and the people.

For the present, however, though Schiller continued to assemble the materials for his projected Tell-drama, its execution was retarded by various circumstances. Other projects solicited him, and in August 1802 he finally decided to give precedence to the *Bride of Messina*, which probably tempted him by the prospect of earlier completion. This was to be followed by a play based upon the fortunes of the pretender Warbeck. In a letter to his friend Körner, of September 1802, he announces this programme, and then passing on to speak of the Tell-drama, which was to follow the Warbeck, he says:—

Now (*i.e.* during the reading of Tschudi) I began to see my way clearly, for this writer has so ingenious, so Herodotic, nay almost so Homeric a spirit, as of itself suffices to put a man in poetic vein. . . . Now though the Tell appears anything but a favourable subject for dramatic treatment, since the action entirely lacks unity of time and place, since it is largely a political action, and, with the exception of the story of the hat and apple, does not lend itself to representation, I have nevertheless already so far elaborated it that it has passed from the domain of history into the domain of poetry. For the rest I need not tell you that it is a plaguy piece of work; for even if, as is only reasonable, I make some deduction from all the expectations with which the public and the age greet this of all subjects, I have still to satisfy a lofty claim on the part of poetry, inasmuch as here a whole locally-characterised people, a whole and remote age, and especially a wholly local, nay

almost individual and unique phenomenon must be visualised with the impress of the highest necessity and truthfulness. However the columns of the building are already firmly planted, and I hope to raise a massive pile.

In February 1803 the *Bride of Messina* was completed. The translation of two French comedies and sundry other theatrical occupations in Weimar kept him busy till May. In the meanwhile, of the two subjects with which he is dallying, the *Tell* project gradually wins the upper hand. In May 1803 he is reading Tschudi again, in July of the same year he writes to Iffland (a theatrical manager in Berlin) who had urged him for a piece that would stage effectively, promising the *Tell* before the expiration of the winter.

This work, he writes, will I hope fall in with your wishes, and, as a popular piece, interest both heart and eye.

From this time he goes strenuously to work upon the preliminary studies for the *Tell*. His letters show him applying to this and that friend for pictures and maps of Switzerland, for books upon its history, natural history, topography and people; and records of borrowings from the library bear witness to the same activity. His surviving manuscripts give us an interesting glimpse of his methods. He made copious excerpts of passages which promised to be of use to him, and when he had availed himself of them, struck them through with his pen.

His letters of this period constantly reveal two phases in his attitude towards the task; his sense of the difficulty of moulding his rebellious

material into the desired dramatic form, and his confidence of a brilliant outcome of his labours.

So writing to Körner in September with a request for books, he says :

If the Gods are propitious to me in the execution of what I have in my head, it shall be a mighty thing, and shake the boards of Germany.

To Iffland in November he writes :

I promise you a proper piece for the whole public.

In October his muse caught inspiration from the representation at the Weimar Theatre of Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, a play which has some kinship with the theme upon which the German poet was engaged. Goethe had urged it on not without the shrewd hope that it might have some such stimulating effect upon his friend's dramatic labours. How well-founded was this hope the following letter of Schiller to Goethe testifies :

For my *Tell* the piece is of priceless worth. It set my own little craft afloat. Yesterday it put me into the most fertile vein.

The English reader will have little difficulty in tracing in the *Tell* both the general influence of Shakspeare's play and individual instances of direct imitation of passages both from this and from other of the works of the English poet.

The completion of the work was still retarded by the ill-health of which, especially in winter, the poet rarely knew surcease. The visit of Madame de Stäel to Weimar introduced another disturbing element, and about the same time he made the acquaintance of the Swiss historian, Johannes von Müller, whose *History of Switzerland* had furnished him with much precious

material. Yet spite of all, by January 1804 he was able to lay before Goethe the completed first act, and to announce to him his hope that the end of the following month would see his task fulfilled. A few days later Goethe also had in his hands the Rütli scene, the midnight meeting of the leaguers on the mountainous shore of the lake. Goethe wrote him his warm appreciation of these samples and his good wishes for its completion.

On the 5th of February Schiller writes to Iffland :

I cannot let the worthy Müller (the historian above-mentioned) set out for Berlin without a few sheets of the *Tell* in his pocket. Such a courier must bring blessing to the work itself. I would gladly have sent the whole of the fourth act, which is finished, but the copyist has not done with it.

On the 18th of February he was able to send to Goethe the completion, which he accompanies with a discussion of various measures to be taken for its production. *The work is a splendid success*, wrote the latter, *and has given me a delightful evening*. In view of the poet's illness Goethe busied himself with the rehearsals and other preparations for production, suggesting also a slight change which Schiller readily made. On the 17th of March took place the first representation at the Court Theatre of Weimar, winning the enthusiastic applause of a crowded house. It was also produced almost concurrently in Berlin, Breslau, Hamburg, and Mannheim, meeting everywhere with the most flattering reception.

The first printed edition appeared, in various forms, towards the end of the same year (1804).

To the *Tell* there attaches a pathetic interest. It was the poet's swan-song. On the 9th of May of the following year (1805), in the prime of his life and at the height of his fame, Schiller was called away.

V

SCHILLER'S SOURCES

Schiller's chief source for his "Wilhelm Tell" was TSCHUDI'S *Chronicon Helveticum, or precise Description of the Events that have befallen both in the Holy Roman Empire and particularly in an honourable Confederacy*. The author, Aegidius Tschudi, lived from 1505 to 1572, and was sometime Landammann of Glarus. Tschudi's *Chronicle* was published in 1734-1736.

After Tschudi, the authors upon whom Schiller chiefly drew are the following:—

JOHANNES MÜLLER, *History of the Swiss Confederacy*, 1780-1795.

JOHANN CONRAD FÄSI, *Minute and Complete Description, Political and Physical, of the Helvetic Confederacy* (1766).

J. G. EBEL, *Description of the Swiss Mountaineers* (1796-1802).*

JOHANN JAKOB SCHEUCHZER, *Natural History of Switzerland* (1706-1708).*

PETERMANN ETTERLIN, *Chronicle of the Honourable Confederacy* (1752).

J. STUMPF, *Swiss Chronicle: that is, a Description of the general honourable Confederacy, its Places, Lands and Peoples, and of such Deeds of the same as are worthy to be chronicled* (1548).

* From these, illustrative Extracts are given in the Notes.

NOTES

Page 3.

Ranz des Vaches.

The *Ranz des Vaches* (German *Kuhreigen*) is a simple melody chanted by the herdsmen, without words, and admitting of endless variations, according to the district or the caprice of the singer. It is also blown upon the Alpine horn. Its original purpose was doubtless to call the kine to the milking, as they strayed in the mountain pastures, but it was also sung on the driving forth of the cattle and on other occasions. Its effect upon the Switzer who heard it in a strange land is a commonplace. The origin of the name is obscure. One etymology, that would fit both the French and the German name, interprets it as meaning the "cow ranks," another as the "cattle call."

Page 3.

Fisherlad's Song.

The mortal lured to his doom by a water-nixie is a frequent theme of legend in all ages, as in the story of Hylas, in Goethe's "Fisher," and in Heine's "Lorelei." Schiller was led to make use of it by the story of the Pastor Molitor, reported in Scheuchzer's *Natural History of Switzerland*, who attributes this power to "woo the sleeper" to a plumbless mountain tarn called *Calandari*.

Indeed I have myself heard, writes MOLITOR, and am assured of aged persons, that a woman fell asleep at a distance from this lake, and was attracted and engulfed by it. . . . There are still many living that have likewise fallen asleep by this lake, and at their waking were already ankle-deep in the water.

Page 4.

Herdsmen's Song.

In spring the herds are driven forth to pasture first in the lowland meadows, then as summer advances ever higher in the mountains, in the wake of spring. In autumn they retrace their steps.

Page 4.

When the fountains are flowing in mirth-bringing May.

SCHEUCHZER: *Fontes majales*, May-fountains, are such fountains or streams as gush forth only in the month of May, and in the autumn month (September) cease to flow again.

Page 4.

The heights how they thunder.

The avalanches fall with a noise as of thunder.

Page 5.

*And far 'neath his footsteps the cities of men,
In a mist-surgng ocean are lost to his ken, etc.,*

cf. SULZER's Preface to Scheuchzer's *Natural History*:

A traveller who climbs a mountain that is hung about with clouds can climb through these; he sees nothing but a thick damp fog. Once above the clouds he enters, as it were, a new world. The sun, veiled from the lower world by the clouds, appears to him. He sees away over the clouds like one that from a small headland looks out upon the great ocean. He perceives an amazing number of islands, the mountains, to wit, which stretch forth their backs through this lofty ocean. A strange occurrence, that gives unspeakable pleasure, especially if the clouds haply open in one place, so that one can cast a glance down from the sky to the deep earth. As those below rejoice when they see the blue sky through the torn clouds, he has an inconceivable pleasure when he sees a land through this same rift.

Page 5.

The Mythenstone.

The *Mythenstein* is a conical rock, some twenty-seven yards high, in the middle of the lake near Treib. It is now dedicated, in letters of gold, "to the singer of Tell, Friedrich Schiller." The two peaks of the Haken, mentioned in the scenic description at the beginning of this scene, are also respectively called

the Greater and the Lesser Mythen, and with the higher of these, which rises over 6000 feet, Schiller would appear to have confounded the Mythenstein.

Page 5.

The storm will be upon us unawares.

The various weather-tokens Schiller derived from Scheuchzer. The *gray dale-ranger* is the gray cloud-rack that drifts down the valley from Unterwalden.

SCHEUCHZER says: The cowherds hold it for a sure sign of approaching rain when the Firn or permanent mountain-ice moans.

The *weather-holes* are clefts in the mountains to which the Swiss go, *as to oracles*, to learn what weather will blow. When a cold wind blows from them, there will be fine weather for hay-making, but a moist, warm wind betokens rainy, stormy weather. Schiller has inverted this rule, possibly because, to the reader unfamiliar with Swiss weather-lore, a cold wind is more suggestive of storm than a warm one.

SCHEUCHZER says: The sheep foretell approaching rain by greedily cropping the grass, the dog by pawing up the earth. . . . The mute fish tell of an approaching plump of rain by unwonted leaps out of the water. . . . Is it not true that usually a rain follows when the ducks and other waterfowl dive often beneath the water?

Page 6

Then is the tale complete, she strays the furthest.

EBEL: *Description of the Swiss Mountaineers.* On the neck of that cow which is accustomed to stray the furthest, the herdsman hangs a bell; when this one approaches he at once knows that all the rest are gathered together.

Page 6

You have a goodly chime of cow-bells, Herdsman.

EBEL: Every herdsman has a chime of bells, which consists of three, or at least two bells. These bells hang on broad leathern bands, fretted and embroidered with figures, which are made fast round the cows' necks by means of great buckles. The largest bell, which is more than a foot in diameter, very broad and bellying above but tapering towards the bottom, costs alone from 40 to 50 gulden, and the whole chime with the bands at times from 130 to 140 gulden. . . . The largest bell is

hung upon the fairest black cow, and the two other smaller bells upon the two next fairest; yet they do not wear this finery every day but only when the herdsman fares with his herd to the meadows and Alpine pastures in spring, or from one to another, or comes down again in autumn, or wanders in winter from one farmer to another to put out his kine to winter-fodder.

Page 6.

And well she knows 'tis she doth lead the march.

EBEL: Behind the herdsman follow two to four fair goats, then the fairest cow with the large bell, behind her the two other bell-kine, then all the rest one behind another.

Page 6.

She would not eat an I should take it from her.

EBEL: It is striking how proudly and self-consciously the belled cows strut along, and who would believe that these beasts are conscious of their rank and feel the stings of vanity and jealousy. If the great bell-bearer, that leads the herd, be deprived of her bravery, her grief at the slight put upon her appears very plainly. She lows incessantly, eats nothing, and pines away; nay, she wreaks her vengeance upon the happy rival that has robbed her of the honour of precedence, butting and goring her with her horns and pursuing her with the most deadly intent, until either the bell is restored to her or she is made away with.

Page 6.

That do we know full well, that hunt the chamois.

SCHUCHZER: The chamois are fond of pasturing in common and in a great company, and their food, which they must snap up in the greatest insecurity, as it were booty, they share in the most friendly manner; but in order that they may pasture with the greater security, if we may believe the hunters and cowherds, they keep good watch, which the leader himself undertakes. . . . He stands on an elevated place, pricks his ears, keeps a sharp look-out, the while the rest pasture, and if he hears or sees anything suspicious, gives a sign with his piping voice, that the rest may hastily take to flight.

Page 7.

The Alp quite bare is cropped.

Alp is the local name for a mountain-pasture.

Page 8.

The Landgrave.

The German is *Landvogt*. The word *Vogt* (Low Latin *vocatus*) enters into composition in a number of

German words, in the sense of *deputy, locum tenens*. Thus in this play alone we have: (i.) *Landvogt*, vice-regent, the governor deputed by the Emperor to rule a territory in his stead; (ii.) *Burgvogt*—the castellan or governor of a castle under the *Landvogt*; (iii.) *Frohnvogt*—the superintendent of statute-labour (Act I., Scene iii.); and *Thalvogt*, lit. dale-regent, a popular name for the clouds that drift up the valley and are regarded as a sign of rain. The two first I have rendered by *Landgrave* and *Burgrave*, which resemble them in origin and meaning, and have the advantage of sounding not unfamiliar to English ears; in strictness the *Vogt* holds his office by the will of his lord, whilst in the case of the *Graf* or *Grave* the office has become hereditary. *Frohnvogt* I have rendered by *Bailiff*, and *Thalvogt* by *Dale-ranger*.

Page 8.

My own good house-right have I exercised.

Baumgarten was well within his right according to old German and Roman law.

Page 10.

The Föhn is on us!

SCHEUCHZER: The Föhn, or South Wind blows at times so boisterously in the plain of Altorf that no man at those times dare adventure himself upon the lake, and in the town of Altorf the people are even warned by the authorities to be very cautious with the fire that must be kindled for the cooking of the food, or not to kindle any, unless it be absolutely necessary, lest everything should be consumed in a conflagration.

Page 13.

*'Tis Jude and Simon's Day,
The lake doth roar and raven for its victim.*

Jude and Simon's Day (October 28) passes in proverbial lore for the beginning of winter. So *Simon and Jude hangs the snow on the bushes*, and *When Simon and Jude is past, winter comes apace*. The superstition alluded to in the text is apparently an invention of Schiller, founded upon the widespread popular belief that certain rivers take their toll of blood. So in England Tweed and Till:—

Tweed said to Till,
 "What gars ye rin sae still?"
 Till said to Tweed,
 "Though ye rin wi' speed,
 And I rin slaw,
 Whaur ye droon ae man,
 I droon twa!"

Page 16.

*Take ye no oath to Austria, can ye help it,
 But staunch and sturdy to the Empire cleave.*

See Appendix I.

Page 16.

*In Schwyz you are my guest,
 As I yours in Lucerne.*

Cf. *Iliad* vi. 224: Therefore now am I to thee a dear guest-friend in midmost Argos, and thou in Lykia, when'er I fare to your land (Leaf's Translation).

Page 17.

And with wise saws,

The traveller still not infrequently finds "wise saws" inscribed upon houses in Switzerland. Such are the following:

We men build houses strong and well,
 Wherein but as strange guests we dwell,
 And where we must for ever be,
 We turn our thoughts unwillingly,

and

God's measure my pleasure.

Page 20.

*him that highest is
 In Christendom.*

The Emperor, whether as nominally the successor of the Roman Emperors, the masters of the world, or as actually holding sway over the greatest temporal dominion of Europe.

Page 20.

*For yonder o'er the lake as Gessler here
 The Landenberger bears him insolently.*

Gessler is Landgrave of Uri and Schwyz, *Landenberg* of Unterwalden. Cf. Appendix II., page 220.

Page 23.

The pilgrim faring to the House of God.

St Meinrad's Cell is meant. Cf. note to page 35.

Page 25.

The heavy boon-work.

Boon-work, the French *corvée*, is the compulsory labour which a feudal lord was entitled to exact from his vassals.

Page 27.

Our House of Freedom God Himself hath 'stablished.

SCHEUCHZER: Our strongholds, wherein we sleep in peace, are our high mountains, not builded by man's wit and man's hands, but by the almighty wisdom of God; and within these our walls they protect our liberties, spiritual and corporeal, as well amongst and against one another as against foreign potentates. . . . The foundations of the mountains are a seat exceeding firm, whereupon the columns stand. The flanks are like unto buttresses.

Page 28.

*An't were the Imperial crown now, but it is
The hat of Austria.*

See Appendix I.

Page 29.

When from its gorges rises up the Föhn.

See note to page 10.

Page 35.

Meinrad's Cell.

Meinrad, the son of Berchtold, Count of Hohenzollern, built himself in 832 a hermitage in the gloomy woods where now the Abbey of Einsiedeln stands. In 861 he was murdered by robbers and his cell fell into ruin. In 906 a Count Eberhard restored it. In 946 the Emperor Otto I. erected Meinrad's Cell into an abbey, "chiefly for the consolation of the gently-born," and called it *Our Lady of the Hermits*. The Abbey of Einsiedeln became a great resort of pilgrims from all the surrounding countries.

Page 39.

*No more he'll see the snowy mountain-peaks
Flush with faint rose beneath the touch of dawn!*

The so-called Alpine-glow, the reflection of the rosy tints of sunset and dawn upon the snow-capped peaks, is one of the most beautiful effects in Swiss scenery.

Page 40.

*Though yonder in the Schreckhorn's palace of ice
He dwelt, or higher, where the Jungfrau sits
Veiled since Eternity.*

Schreckhorn is literally *Peak of Terror*; Jungfrau, *The Maiden*. Neither peak had been climbed in Schiller's time.

Page 41.

*The chamois drags the hunter o'er the brink
Into the yawning gulf.*

SCHUCHZER: Haply it befalls that one or several beasts are driven by the cunning hunter upon a narrow pass scarce a quarter of a foot wide, into such straits that they can go on no further, yet see behind them their deadly foe, cutting off their retreat. In this case the chamois-hunter had need have great wit and courage, for the desperate beast might lightly fall upon him, and hurl him over the cliff-wall. . . . If the chamois finds a small space between the hunter and the cliff, it squeezes in and hurls him down.

Page 43.

The mountain-woodlands,

i.e. The Woodsteads or Forest Cantons.

Page 44.

Below the Wood.

The wood is the Kernwald, which divides Unterwalden into two parts, Obwalden,—*Above the Wood*, and Nidwalden—*Below the Wood*.

Page 48.

*Thou dost proudly flaunt
The peacock's feather, and the purple mantle
About thy shoulders fling.*

The *peacock's feather* and the *purple mantle* are both Austrian emblems.

After the battle of Sempach, says MÜLLER, "whoever should have decked his casque or his hat with peacock's feathers (as the archdukes were wont to do) would have been slain by the people. It is recorded that not a single peacock was allowed to be in the whole of Switzerland, and as one of the confederates, who sat in a public tavern, perceived that the play of the sunbeams formed the colours of the peacock's tail in his glass full of wine, he drew his sword—so the story goes—and with a hundred curses shivered the glass to atoms."

Page 49.

The Landreeve and the Bannerknight.

The *Landreeve* (Landammann) is the head of the executive authority; he presides over the folk-moot, and holds the seal of the country. The *Bannerknight* (Bannerherr) carries the great banner of the country when the army marches out to battle. According to Ebel the two offices are held for life by citizens, between whom they alternate every two years, so that when the one is Landreeve the other is Bannerknight, and *vice versa*.

Page 50.

*And this same song that leads the wandering herds,
With aching yearning shall lay hold on thee,
When upon foreign soil it greets thine ear.*

The famous *ranz des vaches*, that melody so dear to the Swiss that it was forbidden, on pain of death, to play it in their troops (*i.e.* the Swiss guards in France), because it constrained those that heard it to melt into tears, to desert, or to die; such a burning desire did it kindle in them to see their native land again.—JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

Page 51.

*The chain of lands
That he with might and main hath linked around us?
We in his lands, as in a net immeshed,
Are compassed round about on every side.*

In a note made by Schiller for his own use the "chain of lands" is given as follows:—

Zug.	<i>Unter Schweiz.</i>	Einsiedeln.
Lucerne.	<i>Uri.</i>	Glarus.
Entlibuchen.	Wald, Ursern.	Disentis.

Page 53.

Faaventia,

Or *Faenza*, near Ravenna. Thither, when it was besieged by the Emperor Frederick II. in 1240, the Woodsteads sent 600 men.

MÜLLER says:—Their chosen troops waged with such fire the Emperor's war against the Guelphs, that he not only dubbed Struthahn von Winkelried, an Unterwaldner, knight, but gave each valley a charter of liberty.

Page 57.

A rainbow in the middle of the night.

SCHEUCHZER: The other notable instance (of a moon-rainbow), nay, an unexampled example, was seen with amaze on the 31st October (1705) from half-past seven till nine o'clock by a distinguished friend and his travelling-companions, as well as by the inhabitants of the land of Schwyz over against Unterwalden, over the Lake of the Four Woodsteads, to wit a resplendently beautiful rainbow, adorned with all the requisite hues, and, indeed, what hath hitherto been found in no history, above the principal, primary rainbow, another secondary, though this had not a complete arch like the first, and was also quite pale of hue.

Page 59.

The glaciers' milk.

The water that flows from the glaciers is of a greenish-white colour, and not clear, but clouded like milk, by reason of the earthy matter it holds in suspension.

Page 59.

Their very clouds and winds

The self-same course immutably pursue.

EBEL says that the winds on all the lakes which lie at the northern and southern foot of the Alps in the direction of a cross-valley observe a certain regularity. Cf. also SCHEUCHZER: Since (in certain places) one can usually count upon the wind and foretell with certainty what wind will blow to-morrow, nay, the whole year through, at this or that time of day.

Page 59.

So hath the ancient custom here lived on.

MÜLLER: It (the Swiss people) hath certain time-honoured inrooted principles; if strangers make unanswerable objections to them, they themselves fall under suspicion, and confirm the lore of their forefathers. Everything new is hated, because in the uniform course of life each day is like the same day of the previous and the following year.

Page 62.

*A Winkelried it was that slew the dragon
I' the Weiler fen, and in this fray his life
Laid down.*

Struthahn Winkelried (note to page 53 *Faventia*), so the story went, slew a *loathly worm or dragon* that dwelt in a cave near Oedweiler (called also Weiler and Drachenried), whence it took toll of men and beasts.

TSCHUDI says: Thereupon the blood or envenomed sweat of the dragon ran down his sword upon his naked body, so that the gallant man likewise died a few days thereafter.

Page 62.

*They're abbey-folk
Of Engelberg.*

The rich Benedictine Abbey of Engelberg had its serfs like any other great landed proprietor.

Page 63.

Hark to the horn of Uri.

The name *Uri* was derived from the *Aurochs*, old German *Urochse*, a species of wild ox, the head of which also figures in the armorial bearings of the Canton.

STUMPF says: In war they bore with them a great horn (it passed for an Auer-horn), which they blew for a signal like a trumpet. An especial landman was appointed to this service and horn-blowing, who was therefore called the Bull of Uri.

Page 64.

*What gloomy night hath spun
Jocund and free shall seek the light o' the sun!*

A German proverb says:—

Nothing is so finely spun
But sees at last the light o' the sun.

Page 64.

*Let us
As ancient custom bids, a Diet hold.*

EBEL in his "*Description of the Mountaineers of Switzerland*" thus describes a Folk-moot:—The Landammann, the head of the whole people, presides over the assembly; he mounts upon a pulpit-like scaffolding of wood, raised some feet above the earth, the "chair"; on each side of this chair a great battle-sword is set up. By the side of the Landammann stand his beadles and the state-clerk; in front of the latter lies the great Land-book, in which all the decrees of the folk-moot are minuted. The assembled land-folk stand in front of the presidential chair in a great semi-circular crowd, in such wise that the members of each township are together. After an inaugural speech of the Landammann the whole assembly uncovers, and prays for the guidance of Heaven in the coming deliberations. The first business which the People as sovereign takes in hand is the choice of its Head. The state-clerk asks the heads of the land one by one whom they name to this office. At the assembly which Ebel himself attended, all named the name of the retiring Landammann. Thereupon the state-clerk cried out: "Who wills and chooses that N. N. shall be your ruling Landammann for this present year, let him lift his hand. Up went all hands in a trice; the retiring Landammann was accordingly unanimously continued in his office. The acceptance or rejection of a proposition is decided by the majority of votes. . . . At the close of the assembly the state-clerk read to the Landammann from the land-book the oath, and the latter swore in common with all the land-folk "to further the weal and honour of the land, to judge every man by the laws," etc.

In another place EBEL says: It is noteworthy that the officers derived their means of enforcing their authority only from the manners of the people. If a landman refuses obedience to a command, decree, or order, this is repeated a third time "by his oath," and who then refuses obedience becomes dishonoured and defenceless, can be cast into prison, and condemned as a perjurer before the criminal court. (See page 78; *Peace, by your oath!*)

These customs are still to a certain extent observed in Switzerland.

Page 65.

Uri's banner

Th' imperial procession Romeward leads.

See note to page 70, *Harnessed they joined the march to Italy*, etc.

Page 66.

No bondsman can be rightful judge in Schwyz.

MÜLLER: Over all the people the folk-moot elected a Landammann, a man of free birth, of honourable name and well endowed with worldly goods. This dignity was not allowed to serfs, firstly by reason of the honour of the free men, secondly, because the president of a people ought to have no private fear; lastly, lest it should seem that he who obeyed a bondsman must much more serve *his* master.

Page 67.

*'Tis true, then, what the ancient ballads tell
That from afar into the land we wandered?*

MÜLLER: There was an ancient kingdom in the land towards the midnight (*i.e.* the north), in the land of the Frisians and Swedes; over that land there came a time of dearth. In this urgency the folk-moot met; it was resolved by a majority of voices that every tenth man should leave the land. Each man upon whom the lot fell must perforce obey the law. So the exodus of our forefathers from the northern land began, with great lamentations of all their friends and kinsfolk; wailing the mothers led their children of tender years. In three troops, under three chieftains, our fathers marched, six thousand fighting men, great folk like giants, with wives and children, goods and chattels; and they sware never to forsake each other. They grew rich in worldly gear, rich by their victorious arm, when they defeated Count Peter of Franconia upon the Rhine, who wished to stop their march. They prayed to God for a land like the land of their forefathers, where they might pasture their cattle in peace, without injury from wicked violence; and God led them into the neighbourhood of Brochenburg, in which place they builded Schwyz. The folk increased and multiplied; in the valley there was not room enough; yet they shirked no toilsome day to clear the wood, and a part of the multitude marched on into the land towards the Black Mountain (*i.e.* the Brünig in Unterwalden), and into Whiteland (*i.e.*, the Oberhasli valley). The memory still lives on in the valleys of the Oberland how the people marched from mount to mount, from dale to dale, to Frutigen, Obersibenthal, Sarnen, Afflentsch and Jaun; beyond Jaun other tribes dwell.

ETTERLINN'S CHRONICLES: Thus they marched towards the

high German land, and came into districts not far from the gloomy wood, which is now called "Our Lady of the Hermits" (see note to page 35); here they settled in a valley called Brunnen, where there was nought at all save a fair wilderness, and there was no dwelling anywhere round about, save a cottage, wherein there sate one that tended the ferry, for there hath ever been a road and a ferry there; there they purposed on the morrow to fare across the lake, and away over the mountains and the Gothard towards Rome. Now there arose in the night a terrible monstrous wind, the like of which was never seen before, by reason whereof they could not come from the place. Thereupon they went to and fro in the woods, looked upon the face of the country and found there goodly timber, fair fresh springs, and a fitting place, which, as seemed to them, when it was tilled, would not be unlike their land in Sweden, and they took counsel together to abide in that place.

Page 69.

*Within the very confines of our land
Live many settlers bound to others' service
That hand their bondage on unto their children.*

MÜLLER : Amongst the Swiss there dwelt many serfs, bound body and goods, or at any rate by obligations of tribute to princes and kings, to the Counts of Rappersweil and Lenzburg, to the Abbeys of Lucerne, of Einsiedeln, to the Abbey of Our Lady of Zürich, to other spiritual and temporal lords.

Page 69.

*Freely we chose the Emperor's shield and shelter,
So it stands writ in Emperor Frederick's charter.*

See note to page 53: *Faventia* :—When the Emperor sought their help on this occasion, they proffered allegiance to him and the Empire, and the requested help, says TSCHUDI, "in so far as he should give them a charter and seal that they were free, and that of their own will, free and unconstrained, they submitted themselves to his dominion and that of the Roman Empire, and that he should at all times shield and shelter them, and never alienate them from the Empire.

Page 69.

Lord of the German and the Roman world.

The official style of the Empire was *The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation*, though the limiting epithet was not added till the time of the Emperor Maximilian.

Page 70

*Harnessed they joined the march to Italy,
To set the Roman crown upon his head.*

That is, on the imperial progress to Rome for the coronation of the Emperor-elect at the hands of the Pope.

Page 70.

*Unto the Emperor's self we did deny
Obedience, when in favour of the priests
The right he wrenched.*

MÜLLER: These Woodsteads lived unknown and no less happy till Gerhard, abbot at Einsiedeln, arraigned the landfolk of Schwyz before the Emperor Henry the Fifth, on the ground that they pastured their cattle upon the mountain pastures of the Abbey. The men of Schwyz had inherited these mountains from their fathers; when the Emperor Henry the Second granted the neighbouring wilderness in fee to the Abbey the landfolk were forgotten by him and kept in the background by the Abbot; so the Abbot included under the name of the unenclosed waste as much as ever he could till and turn to account. The herdsmen of Schwyz refused to withdraw from the heritage of their forefathers. Thereupon the Abbot made his plaint at the Diet of the Emperor Henry V. at Basle. Doubtless few of the men of Schwyz could read or write at that time; they had no defence other than the evidence of their fathers and forefathers against the Charter of Gift, which seemed to them ambiguous and unjust, and had been unknown both to them and to their forefathers. Then, as in other cases, Right became Wrong because a form was lacking to it; the Charter of Gift of the Emperor Henry the Second was not judged, but in the matter of the mountains the Emperor decided for the Prelate. The landfolk did not bow to the Emperor's decision, but asserted their paternal heritage. There is amongst pastoral peoples that live in loneliness an exceeding great reverence for the opinions and traditions of their fathers; their customs are largely grounded thereon, their ardour for liberty has no firmer foundation. The disobedience of the Swiss remained unpunished. Yet thirty years after the monks obtained from the same Emperor Conrad who undertook the crusade, that obedience should be enjoined upon the Swiss under the menace of imperial outlawry. Thereupon the landfolk said: If the Emperor to their hurt and with insult to the memories of their fathers was minded to give to the unjust priests their mountain pastures, then the shelter of the Empire was naught worth to them, and henceforth they would shelter themselves with their own right arms. Hereupon the Emperor was ungracious to them; they were outlawed, and Hermann, Bishop of Constance, excommunicated them. But they forsook the shelter of the Empire; in this Uri and Unterwalden followed them.

Cf. also Appendix I., page 205.

Page 71.

*This soil we have created to our use
By our hands' industry.*

MÜLLER thus describes primeval Switzerland: Lofty trees of monstrous girth filled the nameless wilderness with black forest; over the waters of the undammed streams and a hundred fenny meres stood cold venomous fogs, and . . . in the plants unwholesome saps arose; from them the dragon-brood sucked its venom and grew to incredible bulk and stature. . . . Save the cry of the lämmergeier in a rocky cleft, the bellowing of the aurochs and the growling of great bears, a dreary silence reigned for many hundreds of years in the lifeless land that lay to the north. . . . Long and laborious was the war men waged to reclaim the soil for habitation and culture.

Page 76.

The great Lady of Zürich.

The Abbess of the great and wealthy Abbey of Zürich.

Page 83.

*Me doth it fill with horror what the men
Each other tell of your adventurous rambles,*

EBEL: If the huntsman stalks single chamois he easily comes into great peril. Up the rocky crags the road goes ever rather than down again, and there the sight of black abysses makes the head to swim and the foot to falter. In this manner the chamois-hunter easily climbs astray in the heat of the chase, and nothing is left him but to seek his way back either by break-neck leaps or by painful climbing with naked feet.

Page 84.

*the chamois bounding back
Drag thee down with it o'er the precipice.*

See note to p. 41.

Page 84.

I see the gusty avalanche o'erwhelm thee.

SCHUCHZER: There are two principal species of avalanches. The first are called Wind-Avalanches, for that they are mostly set up by the wind, which dislodges the fallen snow from the high places, and so provokes its fall; partly, too, by reason of their effect, for that they sweep along swift as the wind, and by their fall engender so strong and boisterous a wind as even

from afar hurls everything to the ground, snaps the greatest fir-trees in twain, etc.

The second species is called Shock-Avalanches, for that, not so much by reason of accompanying wind as by their own weight, they overthrow everything that stands in their way, and consist not only of snow (and that of old snow firmly massed together), but also involve and drag forth with them trees, rocks, stones, nay, the very ground itself, and tear everything up from its seat.

In this place Schiller uses the word *Windlawine*, Wind-Avalanche. On p. 99 he has *Schlaglawine*, Shock-Avalanche.

Page 97.

who should come but Rösselmann
The parson, from a sick-bed, as it chanced,
And sees it all, and with the Holy Host
Here, right in front o' the pole he plants himself.
The Sacristan rings me the sacring-bell.
And down they drop, all on their marrow-bones,
I with the rest, and greet—the hat? Nay, marry,
The monstrance!

The *Holy Host*, as being the true body of the Lord, is the object of adoration in Catholic countries. The priest bears it with him because he is returning from the administration of the Viaticum, or last communion, to a dying man. He avails himself of the custom of prostration before the Host to extricate the villagers from their embarrassment by providing an object of reverence other than the hat. The *sacring-bell* is rung to call the attention of worshippers to the more solemn moments of Mass, and notably, upon the elevation of the Host. Strictly speaking, the Host would be borne to the sick-bed in a *ciborium*, a sort of covered chalice used for the reservation of the Eucharist, and not in the *monstrance*, which is borne in solemn procession, and furnished with glass, so that the consecrated wafer is visible.

For another reference to the custom see Goethe's *Faust* (Temple Classics), p. 52, with note.

Rösselmann's act has been generally stigmatised as a subterfuge unworthy of the dignity of brave men, and as a profanation of the sanctity of the Host.

Page 98.

The Bannberg.

SCHUCHZER: Upon the eastern side of the township of Altorf is the precipitous and wooded Bamberg, perhaps Bannberg) *i.e.* the mountain which stands beneath a ban), for that none is allowed to fell so much as a sapling, still less a tall fir-tree, upon heavy penalties for the transgressor, lest haply trees and rocks should fall down, which would bring destruction upon houses and stables, but to men and cattle death.

FÄSI: Above the township there rises one of the loftiest and mightiest mountains, which (especially towards its foot) is thickly overgrown with fir trees. The part of this mountain towards the township is called the Bannberg. It is forbidden, under heavy penalties, to fell timber upon it, inasmuch as that is indispensably necessary to uphold and break up the snow-avalanches which in winter-time roll down from the upper and unfruitful portion of the mountain. But for the shelter which this mighty forest furnishes to the township, it would to all appearance long since have been overwhelmed by these appalling masses of snow.

Page 99.

His hand will grow from out his grave.

As the legends say a murderer's does.

Page 99.

and send the avalanches on us.

See note to p. 84. Here Schiller has *Schlaglawinen*, *Shock-avalanches*.

Page 100.

The stream, the sea, the salt, all are the king's.

The salt-monopoly (French *gabelle*) was an important source of revenue. As early as the 12th century it was declared the property of the King.

Page 106.

If I were heedful, Tell were not my name.

Tell is a nickname, interpreted here as meaning the "*simple*," almost the "*simpleton*," cognate with English *dull* and German *toll*, mad.

Page 111.

One of you bind the boy to yonder lime-tree.

In Act V. Scene i., Schiller assumes, inconsistently with this line, that Walter Tell stood for the shot by the pole on which the hat hung.

Page 117.

So long as stand the hills on their foundations.

SCHUCHER: The old saying of the federated peoples; Whilst crag and base stand in their place (So lang Grund und Grath staht) is surely more reasonable than the word "ever" which is else used.

Page 119.

*There you o'erstep your rights—you overstep
The Emperor's rights, you violate our charter.*

For Küssnacht was Austrian, and it was contrary to the charter that any Swiss should be taken out of his own country. In the MS. these two lines are preceded by another: "*What! you will take him captive from the land,*" which was probably omitted from the printed edition by oversight.

Page 124.

*Hath once the storm
Within this watery gulf entrapped itself,
It rages with a tiger's restlessness.*

FÄSI: Round about, it (Lake Uri) is encircled with amazingly high cliffs. To the west lies the Devil's Minster and the Werch, to the south the Kolm, to the east near Flüelen the lesser and the greater Axenberg, the Chopping-knife, the Bukisgrat. . . . This appalling cliff- and mountain-valley, in which the lake lies, has really only one opening, towards Altorf and Lucerne, through which the wind can pass. But inasmuch as the greater number of the winds take rise in this valley, they must, since the vehement pressure of air hath not sufficient room for an issue, spend their fury in the place of their birth, and be changed into gusts and whirlwinds. . . . The ships that have the ill-hap to be upon the lake during such a time, stand momentarily in the most evident danger of being shattered against the cliffs at every repeated shock of the storm and of the foaming waters. With the exception of Brunnen, Flüelen, Tell's Terrace, Buchs, Gersau and Stanzstad, on the eastern shore of the lake there are no single places at which the ships can land or gain help in distress.

Page 129.

*Where, flattened at the top,
A rocky reef did jut into the lake—*

FÄSI : The terrace or reef of rock, whereupon the bold leaguer made his escape, hangs upon the side of the great Axenberg, a good hour below Flüelen. In front of the terrace are some schistous rocks, near which the ships can come to land. This is the only landing-place in a wide stretch of the lake. The whole level surface round about the chapel is not more than eighteen square feet.

Page 135.

*for as the Alpine rose
I' the air o' the marsh doth pale and hang its head.*

The Alpine-rose, *rhododendron ferrugineum*, grows on the mountains along the very edge of the glacier; if it be brought into the air of the valleys, its blossoms at once shrivel and fade.

Page 139.

*That is not Nature's lamp that flares and dies,
It is the morning beam of a new life.*

The definitive liberation of the Swiss cantons cannot well be brought within the compass of one play. Schiller felicitously avails himself of the wide-spread belief in the prophetic vision of the dying, to put into Attinghausen's mouth a prediction of the triumphs of the Swiss confederacy.

Page 139.

*From his old castle comes the noble down,
And to the cities swears the civic oath.*

At first the old Thane of Attinghausen merely surveys the signs of the times, the union of the nobles with the burghers and the growth of the spirit of independence in neighbouring districts, destined at a later time to join the confederacy inaugurated by Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden.

Page 139.

E'en now in Uechtland is't begun, in Thurgau.

Uechtland is the tract of country between the River Aar and the Jura Lakes (Neufchatel, Bienne and

Morat), formerly a marshy waste. Berne and Freiburg are in Uechtland.

Thurgau (i.e. the district about the River Thur) is now a small canton on the west shore of Lake Constance. The name was formerly applied to the whole territory between Aargau and Lake Constance. In the Thurgau Zürich was situated.

Page 139.

Her queenly head the noble Berne uplifts,

Berne, a little town on a peninsula in the Aar, was fortified (1191) by another Duke of Zähringen.

Cf. Appendix I., page 204.

MÜLLER says: The love of liberty united here the neighbouring nobility, because this town was not ruled by a princely house, but stood, as an imperial estate, under the shield of the Empire. From the Emperor's Majesty to the man and citizen that was immediately subject to the Empire, there was no greater interval than to the great baron. . . . The citizens were not great in numbers, but strong through their customs. They were good yeomen and warriors, who held liberty for the highest good and the truest dignity amongst human beings.

Page 139.

And Freiburg is a Stronghold of the Free.

Freiburg was founded in 1178 by a Duke of Zähringen as a "stronghold of the lesser nobility."

Cf. Appendix I., page 204.

MÜLLER says: Gentle and simple of the surrounding tract rallied to it for a three hours' radius; the town and the country district formed a community under a mayor.

Schiller plays upon the literal meaning of Freiburg—*The stronghold of the free.*

Page 139.

*The bustling Zürich arms her craftsman-guilds
Unto a warlike host. The might of kings
Shatters itself on her eternal walls.*

Zürich was a metropolis of commerce, whose noblest gain was the consciousness of dignity of its people.

MÜLLER says that the Council took no step without committees of the handicraft guilds.

Schiller has in mind the organisation of the craftsmen into thirteen guilds, each fighting under its own banner, and together forming a sort of militia. This belonged in fact to a later constitution, but guilds had existed earlier in Zürich.

The free cities had to withstand more than one siege 'by the might of kings.' In speaking of Zürich, the dying man is already passing over into the tone of prophecy—and doubtless Schiller has here in mind particularly the siege of the city under the Emperor Charles IV., who refused to recognise the validity of the Swiss Confederacy to which Berne had acceded in 1353." (See Appendix I., page 217.)

Page 139.

*I see the princes and the noble lords
March forth to battle panoplied in steel,
To war upon a harmless folk of shepherds.
The fight is to the death, and many a pass
Grows glorious through a bloody settlement.
The yeoman hurls him with his naked breast
A free-will offering on the bristling spears.
He breaks their rank—the flower of knighthood falls
And freedom, triumphing, unfurls aloft
Her glorious banner.*

The references are to *Morgarten*, *Laupen*, *Sempach* and *Näfels*, for which see Appendix I., page 215 *et seq.*

Page 140.

*Wherefore link yourselves
Firmly together, firmly and for ever.
No home of freedom be to other strange.*

For the growth of the Confederacy see Appendix I., pages 216 and 218.

Page 142.

Ana older our condition is than yours.

Cf. *When Adam delved ana Eve span
Who was then the gentleman.*

Page 148.

Ammon's horn.

Or *ammonite*, the fossilised shell of an extinct mollusc, which somewhat resembles a ram's horn. It is named from Ammon, an Egyptian divinity worshipped under the form of a ram and identified with Jupiter.

Page 148.

*To clamber up the steep and slippery walls
Whereon he glues himself with his own blood.*

SCHUCHZER: It may chance that a hunter climbs so far astray that he can scarce go on or return, and is constrained to save his life by a desperate leap, for the which he has no foothold but a jutting crag, half a hand, or at the most a hand broad. In this uttermost danger he throws from him his bow, draws off his shoes, which he cannot trust by reason of their slipperiness, cuts himself with his knife in the heels or balls of the foot, that the outgushing blood may serve him in the stead of glue upon the aforesaid rocky jutting to hold his foot fast on the cliff without danger of slipping; then he boldly poises himself and dares the leap.

Page 154.

A poor wildgrass-cutter o' the Rigiberg.

SCHUCHZER: Wildgrass-cutters (Wildheuer) are poor folk that have neither meadows nor Alpine-pastures whereon to feed their few cattle; on which account they are driven to gather the hay in the wastes in high and precipitous places, whither the owners do not even trust their cattle to climb that they may crop the grass, for they might fall; neither do they think it worth the while to send their mowers thither. To such places the wildgrass-cutters betake themselves, and the fodder, that seems by the law of nature to belong rather to the wild chamois than to the tame kine, they cut at peril of their lives, for that often they can scarce stand securely on one foot. They are wont to roll the grass in a net and hurl it over the cliffs, whereby it haply befalls that the universal Mower of Men straightway cuts the thread of life of these wildgrass-cutters, if perchance they lose their foothold, or if their foot, with which they have thrust forth their burden of grass over the uttermost craggy points, becomes entangled in the net, so that they are forthwith dragged away and fall wretchedly.

Page 161.

The Brethren of Mercy.

The Order of the Brethren of Mercy was founded by a Portuguese, Juan Ciudad (di Dio), and not until the year 1540. Its introduction at the opening of the fourteenth century is, therefore, an anachronism. It was originally a lay brotherhood for the gratuitous care of the sick. Pope Pius V., impressed upon it the character of a monastic order in 1572. It spread rapidly over Spain, France, Italy and Germany.

Page 161.

The victim lies.—Upon it swoop the ravens.

Stüssi's gibe jars disagreeably upon us. It is more in keeping with sceptical modern France than with pious mediæval Switzerland. Stüssi, according to Schiller's own statement, was to play the part of the Shaksperian clown. The comparison of the Brethren of Mercy with ravens is based upon their black robes, but likewise hints rapacity. So in France the priests are nicknamed *corbeaux* or *crows* by scoffers.

Page 167.

God! underneath this hat my grandson stood.

Cf. note to p. 111.

Page 171.

*An antique mighty city lies beneath it
From pagan times.*
people say

Vindonissa (Windisch), destroyed by Childebert II., A.D. 594. (See Appendix I., p. 194.)

Page 172.

As in May-dew.
in blood to bathe

Bathing in May-dew is a familiar custom. The grim aptness of Queen Agnes' threat is more apparent

if we remember that the murder of King Albrecht actually took place on May-day, whereas Schiller places it late in the year, to make it square with the chronology of his drama.

Page 182.

John the Parricide.

Johannes Parricida—so the murderer is styled in history. The literal meaning of *parricide* was widened in Roman law to include the murder of any near kinsman.

Page 186.

*I will describe thy way, give thou good heed.
Upwards it leads along the Reuss's course.*

The road thus described is the famous Pass of St Gothard. In the first three stanzas of his Mountain Song Schiller describes the same road. A translation of these is here given, as they form an interesting parallel.

The pathway dizzily skirts the abyss,
It leads betwixt life and undoing.
And barred by the giants the lone road is,
Eternally threatening ruin.
And wouldst thou not waken the sleeping lawine¹
In the highroad of horror, tread softly therein.

From the brink of the shuddering void in a span
To the brink a bridge goes faring.
It never was builded by hand of man,
Man's heart was never so daring.
Early and late brawls beneath it the river,
Ever bespatters it, shatters it never.

Black yawns a dread portal—thyself wouldst thou ween
To the Realm of the Shadows translated,
When suddenly opens a radiant scene,
Where Autumn with Springtide is mated.
From the labour of life, its eternal unrest,
Fain would I flee to that vale of the blest.

A. G. L.

FÄSI, Schiller's authority, describes the road as follows:

From Göschenen to the Devil's Bridge the road always follows the course of the Reuss. . . . A horrible district and

¹ Pronounced *laveen*, avalanche.

dangerous by reason of the many avalanches. The eye beholds nothing save a monstrous narrow wilderness. The forests have entirely disappeared. There is not the faintest vestige of a shrub that could grow here. The unscaleably steep cliffs, clad above with eternal snow, which beetle over the traveller's head, past which, nay partly beneath which the road first winds along, the Reuss plunging wildly down over the rocks of this gorge, with the multitude of torrents streaming down the face of the cliff, are the only things to be seen in this dreary tract. What makes it the more melancholy even in summer time is the absence of the sun. . . . In spring the rocky masses, rent asunder and shattered by the winter frosts, tear themselves easily away; not seldom they rob the traveller of his life. From Göschenen to the Devil's Bridge as many as twenty-three crosses are seen, set up in memory of the slain. . . . The narrow but very deep rocky gorge, which is not 200 paces broad, the Reuss brawling and foaming appallingly deep below; the cliffs threatening to fall at every moment; the many memorials of death standing side by side, make even the coarsest natures thoughtful and timid. . . . When this toilsome journey has been accomplished, one reaches the most noteworthy place on the whole highroad towards the upper height of the Gothard, to wit, the Devil's Bridge. This is indeed a costly, but not an extraordinarily artistic work. . . . Above the bridge the river plunges down with a fearful din over cliffs some five or six fathoms deep. By reason of this fall, and the repeated breaking of the water, a great portion of it is changed into spray and mist. Whole clouds of this spray are seen around the bridge, so that the surrounding tract is ever besprinkled with it. From this bridge the road rises precipitously. After a stretch of three or four hundred paces you reach a cliff through which, Anno 1707, the road was at great expense partly hewn, partly blasted. . . . This remarkable pass is called the Urner-Hole. . . . The length of this rocky tunnel is some eighty paces; it is so roomy that a horseman can ride through sitting erect on horseback. . . . The little light that one enjoys in the cliff falls through an opening in the middle of the tunnel, which is not quite seven feet high and three broad. When you have accomplished the way through the cliff, the delightful Urseren Dale immediately presents itself to the eye in right enchanting wise. Those who traverse the Gothard for the first time in summer think themselves suddenly translated from the most horrible wilderness into the most charming paradise, when they compare the prospect at the end of the cliff with the wilderness in which they found themselves only a few minutes before."

The *Devil's Bridge* of the above extract is identified by Müller with the *Bridge of Drizzling Spray*.

Page 187.

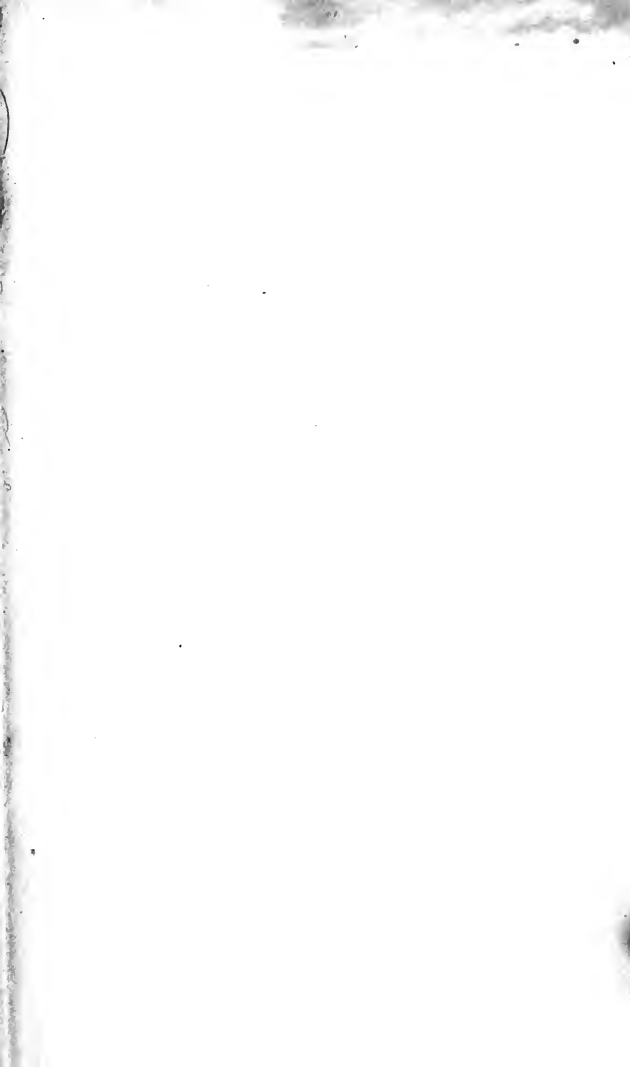
*Thus climbing ever wilt thou reach the heights
Of Gothard, whereon lie the eternal meres
That straight from Heaven's streams are plenishéd.*

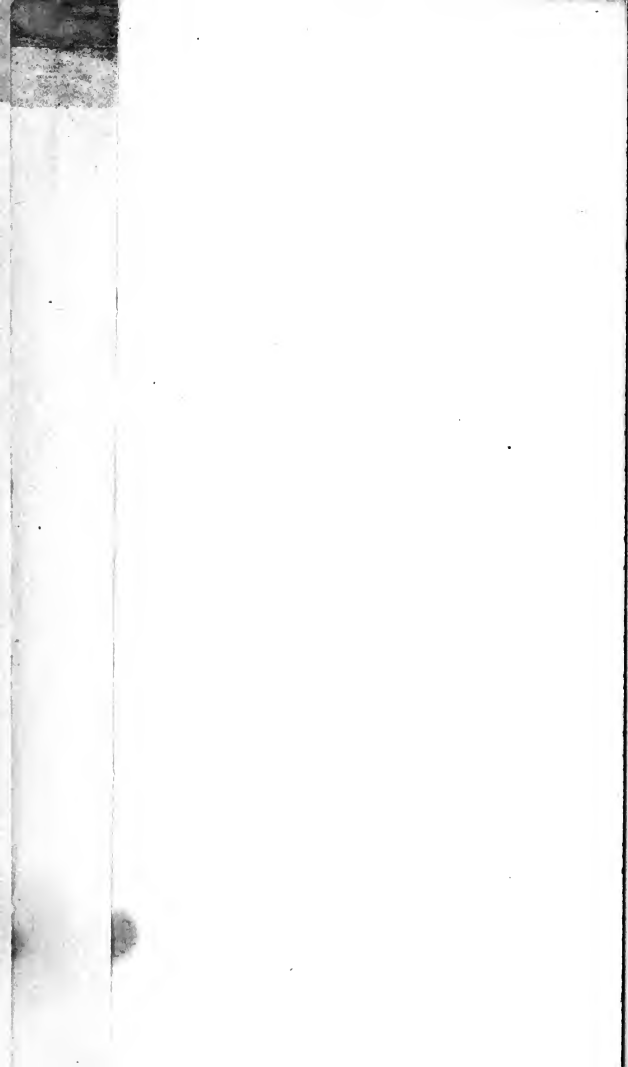
FÄSI: Upon the height of the Gothard you come within the space of an hour upon six or seven little meres. . . . The water of all these meres, which must beyond all doubt be the highest in Europe, is a clear mountain or spring water. They have their sources partly in brooks that flow down into them from higher mountains, partly from their own springs, which lie in the depths of the meres. The meres remain almost the whole year through of like depth.

THE END.

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